

The HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN

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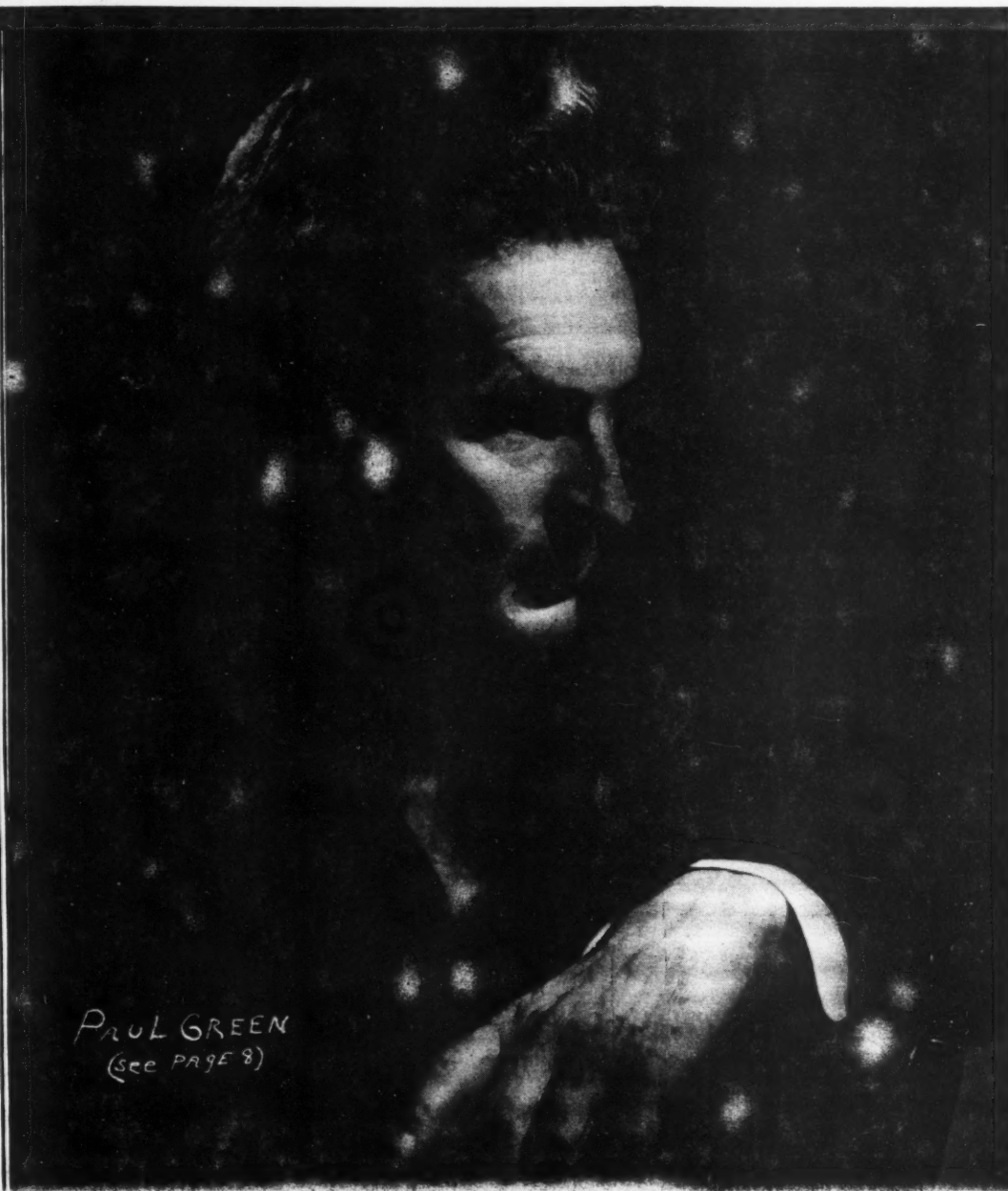
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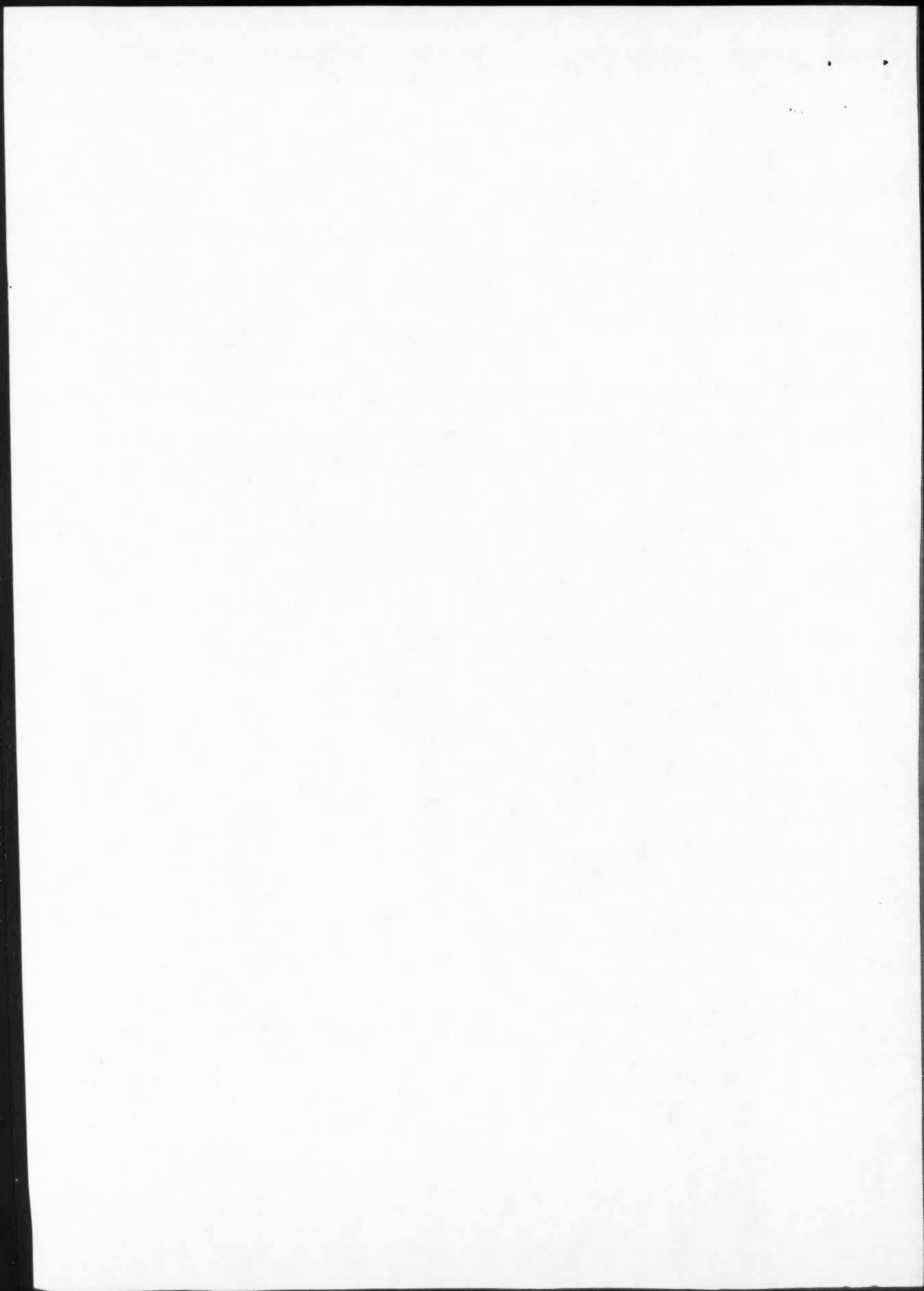
by HAROLD TURNEY

MARCH, 1940



PAUL GREEN
(see PAGE 8)





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Occupational Opportunities in the Field of Drama

The Second in a Series of Four Articles on Occupational Information
for High School Students with Talent in Dramatics.*

by FRANCES WEAVER

Thespian Troupe Sponsor, Oceanside, New York, High School

SINCE entertainment is coming more and more to be a major industry in the world, the drama in all its aspects and through all its mediums offers a wealth of opportunity for talented men and women. The legitimate theatre, the movie, the radio all need large numbers with various types of abilities. Generally speaking, we can divide the entire field into three major classifications: *Writing, Direction and Organization, Performance*. Noel Coward, for instance, might be listed under all three headings, but usually an individual is talented along one line in particular. Sometimes these abilities overlap, or after experience, change and develop along other lines. However, for the purpose of clarity, we shall group the occupations under these three general classifications.

Writing and the Theatre

THE playwright may acquire a technical knowledge of his craft, but without dramatic instinct all the work, study and experience in the world is of no avail. Wide reading, varied experience, careful observation, intellectual and emotional understanding of people and situations are essential. A playwright must know something about acting and a great deal about dramatic technique. A few colleges and universities offer courses in playwriting. Yale and Harvard are two good examples. A young dramatist should beware of advertisements in cheap, romantic magazines that offer to criticize and market manuscripts. Plays should be submitted to legitimate play brokers, managers or publishers. Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street and Longmans Green, 55 Fifth Avenue, both of New York City, are reputable play publishers. In recent years, dramatizations of popular and classical novels have been favorably received. This offers an opportunity for those who have dramatic talent, but not too much originality or creative ability.

The large number of recent revivals of old plays is mute evidence of the need for good playwrights and new plays. For success in the writing field, self-discipline and "drive" are essential. Few people are capable of "driving" themselves. After one successful play, the public and the brokers do the urging, and from then on the road is much easier. The advantages

in playwriting are many. Hours may be regular or irregular, work may be done during the day or at night, on the land or on the sea, in the mountains or at the seashore, in the city or in the country. Little equipment is necessary so there are practically no "overhead" expenses, and over and above all—good plays are in demand. The Dramatists Guild has announced five fellowships of \$1,000 each, offered by John Golden, to five new playwrights who are now being sought by a committee appointed for that purpose.

There is a real dearth of plays for amateur production. It is almost impossible to find suitable plays for junior high schools; and senior high schools must rely mostly upon old Broadway successes in spite of the fact that they are not adapted to their use. Thousands of plays and sketches for amateurs are available, but few of them are worth producing. This shows that there is a demand, and that the publishers are aware of it. Row Peterson & Company, 1911 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, Illinois, is trying very hard to meet this demand with worthwhile plays. The Dramatic Publishing Company, 59 East Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill., and several others are putting forth every effort to supply the amateur field. A good three act play brings a royalty of \$25.00 for each performance, and a one-act play brings from \$5.00 to \$10.00. It would be difficult to earn a living wage solely through writing plays for amateur production, but for a side line or avocation it could prove profitable.

The Press Representative

The press representative is employed by the theatre or the producer. His publicity includes news items, photographs, and drawings about the play, the players, the author, the scenery and the producer, which appear in daily and Sunday papers and in magazines. He must thoroughly understand drama, and the theatre-going public. He must know how to interview celebrities. His best training ground is the newspaper in all its aspects. His jobs may be intermittent, but if he is a real "gentleman of the press" he will be able to fill the gaps by free-lancing. His yearly wages should be attractive.

The Drama Critic

The drama critic must have ready for immediate publication his view of every new play. If he writes for a morning paper he is often forced to work at high

speed in order to catch the press. Newspapers generally prefer experience to college training and many of the best critics have gained their knowledge through practical experience and private reading. However, a college student who has made a study of drama and playwriting should find it easier to enter the field today. If a dramatic critic is successful in securing a following, his opportunity for advancement is great. He will be sought after by the largest newspapers and magazines. Even though he is on the regular staff of a publication, there are times when new plays are few. This gives him an opportunity to turn to creative writing during odd moments.

A drama critic must have the natural gift to write. He must be able to interview celebrities, which is an art in itself. He must thoroughly understand the technique, the history, and the purposes of drama. He should cultivate a style that criticizes without offending.

The field is small, but there is a growing demand. More women are needed. Remuneration, especially on the larger papers, is very attractive.

Writing and the Movies

The Scenario Writer

STORIES are the greatest need in the films at the present time. The industry has reached the stage where every film, in order to be successful, must be different must embody one new fundamental idea or a totally fresh presentation of an idea. Writers for the screen are divided into two groups: those who conceive the original story and those who prepare the detailed technical script or continuity from which the director makes his film. The average scenario contains several hundred separate scenes, each of which gives the dialogue, outlines for the actor a definite bit of pantomimic action, the general reaction to the twist of the plot, a physical description of the setting and a suggested method for photographing the sequence. To write a good scenario, one must be grounded thoroughly in the craft of making a picture as well as in what constitutes practical showmanship. The best way to enter the scenario field is to write a story that has screen possibilities. Some of the most successful writers on the screen received their training in the daily grind of newspaper reporting. Others were magazine writers. Some were stenographers and script clerks in the studio have displayed such unusual talent that they became scenario writers earning large incomes. The advantages and disadvantages here are just about as they are in the playwriting field. However, demand for good scenarios far exceeds demand for other forms of creative writing. Young men and women of ability may earn from \$75 to \$1,000 per week in this work.

Film Editor and Cutter

The film editor has one of the important jobs in motion pictures.

* The material contained in this and succeeding articles was prepared originally for the Department of Personnel, School of Education, New York University.—Editor.

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1. Thespian Don Sullivan as Malvolio in *TWELFTH NIGHT*. 2. Scene from the production of *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*. 3. Scene from the play, *STAGE DOOR*. 4. Thespian Tyler Leeper as Sir Toby Belch in *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Productions of the Webster Groves, Mo., High School (Thespian Troupe No. 191). Directed by Mr. Eugene R. Wood. Photographs by Howard Day.

there are any errors in continuity in the final film, the cutter or film editor gets the blame. The photographers shoot miles of film and the cutter has to reduce it to feature length. He must be able to read film and learn to cut and arrange such parts as seem best worth preserving. He must have a complete understanding of movie technique, a story-telling ability and a "picture sense."

The business of cutting and editing pictures is excellent training for anyone interested in a directorial career. Employment is regular and salaries are very attractive. Opportunities at the "top" are limited, but the editorial department is large, so there are many opportunities for assistants.

Script Clerk

Script clerks receive from \$25 to \$50 per week. Such positions are much sought for because they enable one to study at first hand the activities of the scenario writer, director, and cameraman. The script clerk checks the story requirements, details for scene matching, and production progress. He must understand motion picture technique and must have a greater degree of stability than most of the others in the creative department. His work is regular and if he is efficient he will have security.

Motion Picture Critic

The motion picture critic must have the same qualifications as the drama critic. He must be able to condense a long story, should be thoroughly familiar with the movie world, past and present, and should understand the technique of writing and producing.

Mae Tinee, who writes for the *Chicago Tribune*, refuses to interview stars. She is independent and does not care to see first showings. Her reviews present the average point of view and for that reason appeal to the average person.

The field is attractive to women as well as men, and previous newspaper experi-

ence is not essential. Opportunities are limited, but a clever and ingenious young critic can, perhaps, create an opening for himself in his high school, college, or home town paper.

Writing and the Radio

The Radio Playwright

EVERYONE recognizes that a radio play audience differs from other audiences. It may number a million listeners, made up of individuals or small groups gathered around loud speakers—perhaps all over the English-speaking world. Consequently the carefully planned methods of producing laughter and tears in theatrical audiences fail when used on these heterogeneous groups.

At present radio has three types of plays—adapted stage plays, adapted novels and short stories, and plays written for broadcasting. The greatest success has been achieved by the third type in spite of the fact that many of them are an insult to the word "play." A writer who has a continued story on the air, five times a week, for fifty-two weeks, is assured of an excellent income. One writer at the present time receives seven hundred and fifty dollars a week for a half hour comedy program. Several writers earn ten thousand dollars a year from commercially sponsored programs that are heard five times each week.

Courtenay Savage, Director of Continuity and Dramatics, Columbia Broadcasting System, says:

"The young man or woman who feels that he or she would like to write can start to prepare for such a career in high school, and if possible continue the training at college. Today several universities have courses in radio. It is one of several branches of writing, and there may be a definite place in radio for the young man or woman trained for the job. There are six hundred broadcasting stations in this country—many of them on the air sixteen hours a day, and almost every word spoken before the microphone is written in advance!"

The Continuity Writer

The continuity department of a major

radio station employs a number of continuity writers. The student who wishes to prepare for a career as a continuity writer should acquire as much general knowledge as possible. Every subject in the world is broadcast and the more he knows, the better qualified he will be for any job that comes his way. While he is still writing continuities, he may have to write a commentary on a baseball game, to help prepare a special broadcast regarding war, fire or flood. He may have to dramatize a famous ballad, or write a sales talk for a commercial program. If a band is scheduled to broadcast from a hotel, the leader chooses the number of selections and sends a list to the radio station. The continuity writer writes out an introductory announcement and then a sentence or two introducing the individual selections. This sounds easy, but if he has to prepare eight or ten musical programs in the course of a day, he must keep constantly on the alert so that the same expressions won't creep into all the programs. Then, he must have a knowledge and appreciation of music. The ordinary staff member of the continuity department is likely to be overworked and underpaid. Employment is regular and the field is growing.

The Magazine Field

If you have writing ability, but still want to act or produce, work on the various magazines devoted to theatre and movies should offer you an opportunity to meet important people. You will have to have all the characteristics of the reporter, the ability to write cleverly yourself, and also to get others to write for you. Two good new magazines of the movie are: *Cinema Arts*, styled after *Fortune*, and *Cinema Progress*, edited by Dr. Boris V. Morovkin. In the theatre world are the snappy, metropolitan *Variety*, and the rather technical *Theatre Arts Monthly*. Study these magazines. Learn their style and purpose.

"Stage Pictures"

by MIRIAM A. FRANKLIN

Director for the Division of Speech, Grove City College, Grove City, Pa.

WE say, when we go to the opera, that we "hear" it; but when we attend a play, we "see" it. Why this peculiar distinction? Opera is packed with sights to dazzle one's eyes: vividly colored costumes scintillating in the brilliant lights; fabrics of soft velvets, rich shiny satins, or coarse cloth; scenery representing magnificent castle rooms or gloomy, dank cellars. An opera is full of things to see. Similarly is a play filled with things to hear: voices, laughter, music, noises to create illusions, and the story itself. Indeed, one is listening intently all the way through.

If you really think about and compare these two forms of entertainment, you will realize that we "hear" an opera because what we hear is of far greater importance than what we see. And we "see" a play because what we see far surpasses what we hear.

Because this visual aspect of the production is so very important, a play should be prepared with greatest care. It must be interesting to the eye. It is comparable to a choice rose which grows on a carefully nurtured plant. More than half of our joy from the rose comes from seeing it. A scrawny, irregular blossom from a neglected rosebush may smell as sweet. We may even delight in the sight of the sickly blossom if we are starved for flowers; but under ordinary conditions, although we delight in the fragrance and the touch, we like most of all the sight of the perfect rose. Similarly, we enjoy in the theatre what we see more than what we hear.

Few people realize, after enjoying a fine production, that much of their pleasure was due to a series of pictures—living stage-pictures. A good movie is packed with impressive stage-pictures, yet we constantly attend without noticing them. This is as it should be. To take notice of them is exactly what we are supposed not to do. The mind should not be distracted from the important part of the story to observe any technique, be it acting or clothes or scenery or stage-pictures. If, on the other hand, our minds are not distracted, but the play is made the more impressive and enjoyable because of techniques used, a good production is the result. Of course, you students of the theatre are looking for tricks of the trade, and you are sure to find them.

Since, then, the use of stage-pictures is an important technique in making the play interesting, you, as players will wish to make a study of them to discover what they are, how they are to be made, when they are to be used, and what adds to or destroys their effectiveness.

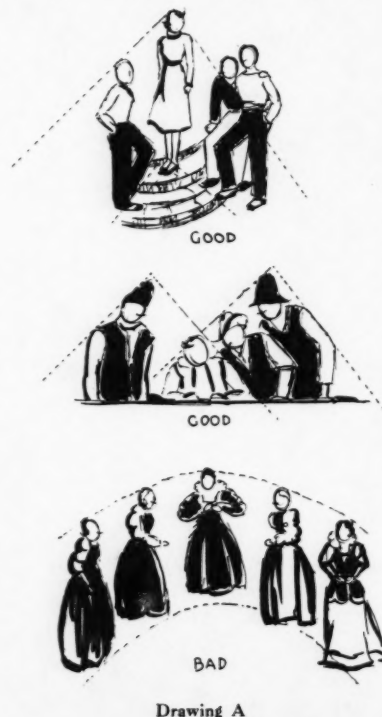
The factors which make up stage-pictures are practically the same as those

This is the fifth in a series of seven articles by Miss Franklin on acting techniques for high school students. The sixth article will appear in the April issue. Miss Franklin is the author of the new textbook, *Rehearsal* (Prentice-Hall), which we recommend to all teachers and students active in dramatics.—EDITOR.

used by an artist painting a picture. The artist visualizes his finished painting in terms of line, mass, space, color and light. The theatre worker uses these same abstract elements, and in addition he utilizes another, movement. The painter often wishes his work to be other than lovely; he may be painting a sad picture, a homely one, or even a grotesque design—but it must be interesting. So also with stage-pictures. They may be ugly or they may be lovely, but they must be interesting.

Around the whole stage-picture is a frame, the proscenium arch. It seems almost to hang on the side of a great wall, the audience looking at it from seats below the level of it, which is lighted with special lights while the audience remains in darkness.

Line, one of these aspects of the stage-picture, means the lines or edges of the group of characters or the furniture and characters as they are arranged. A single straight line is not interesting, whereas a triangle is most interesting; therefore, on



the stage, characters are often arranged in triangles. The stage arrangement seems more pleasing if characters are in planned groups rather than scattered or bunched. Notice in a copy of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" how the Apostles are in groups of three, directing their attention toward the Christ.

Triangles on the stage may be of two general kinds: *horizontal*, those formed by the arrangement of characters themselves; and *vertical*, those formed by the relative height of individuals. Keep this danger in mind: a triangle is not interesting when the apex is lost. A good triangular arrangement may easily revert into an unattractive semi-circle. (See drawing A on this page.)

Interesting arrangements may be other than triangles, however. Artistically irregular lines are more pleasing in some plays, whereas very regular lines seem best in others. In *Beggars on Horseback* many pillars in very regular arrangement fill the stage, while beside each pillar stands a rigid butler. This fantastic arrangement seems to belong with the fantastic play. On the other hand, visualize lines which are pleasingly irregular; for example, a large group of people waving their good-byes to a departing friend. The irregular line made by hands raised high will present a pleasing effect.

Effective verticle lines are more easily arranged if characters can be placed on different levels; some seated on chairs, some standing, others standing on stairs, perhaps someone sitting on a table, another on a footstool. Characters should be placed in close proximity for greatest pictorial effectiveness. The director will need to experiment much in order to try different arrangements, and the players will wish to become line conscious, endeavoring to take and hold at each rehearsal the exact position planned by the director.

Another factor of the stage-picture is *mass*. This means relative size of the groups of characters. One side of the stage must not overbalance the other. A few important characters, however, may balance a large number of less important ones. If only two or three characters are on stage, they will probably act in and about center most of the time.

The sizes of groups will vary. Not often would symmetrical arrangement with the same kind of groups on each side of the stage be best. Mass, or bulk, as it is sometimes called, needs always to be carefully arranged to create a pleasing picture.

Not only mass, but quite the opposite, *space*—that is, open space—helps any picture. Look about you and observe the effective use of space in any painting by a reputable artist where groups of figures are used. Masses of figures, even though grouped, are uninteresting without space setting them apart. (See drawing B on the next page.)

Light and shade, which closely relate to mass and space, is another element to be considered. Imagine a party of people on stage dressed in deep

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NATIONAL THESPIAN PLAYWRITING CONTEST

Manuscripts are now being received for the National Thespian Playwriting Contest, sponsored again this year by The Children's Theatre Press, of Charleston, W. Va. If the winning play is recommended for publication by the judges, the playwright will receive a silver loving cup, and his play will be known as the Thespian Play of the Year.

The contest closes May 30, 1940. For further details write The Contest Editor, The Children's Theatre Press.

A stage-picture is never held for longer than a very short time. Nor is it held rigidly. We don't want them to force their existence into the mind of the audience. It is only when the pictures blend into the production as a whole and do not call attention to themselves that they add to the arts of the theatre.

Experimenting to arrange and develop effective stage-pictures is a fascinating part of rehearsal. All players need to co-operate with the director to arrange stage pictures, thus adding charm and beauty to the production.

You will find it interesting to arrange stage-pictures in several scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*. The first lovely scene which comes into your minds is the balcony scene—Juliet standing on the balcony, a light behind her; Romeo off at an angle below. The positions of the two characters together with the side of the house form the triangle.

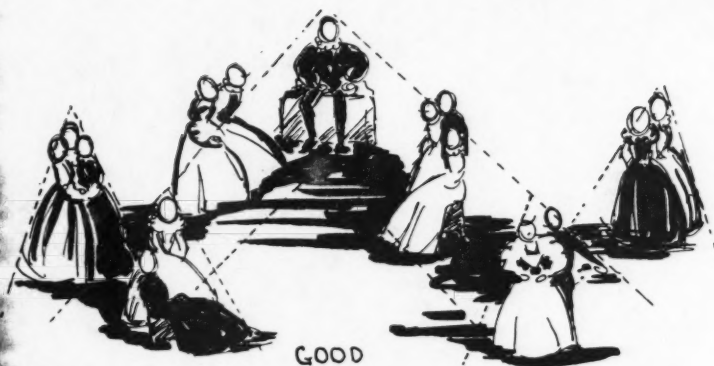
When the nurse returns with news about Romeo, Juliet may drop at her feet or sit on her lap as she coaxes for the information.

The potion scene may be beautiful if Juliet's bed is elevated and steps leading up to it.

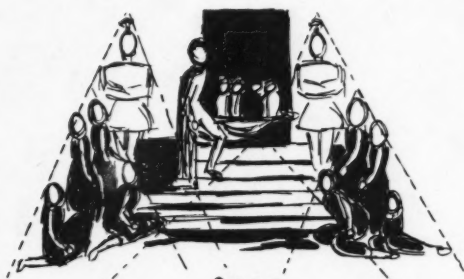
In Act I, Scene V guests are gathered for the ball. They may arrange themselves in pleasing pictures.



GOOD



GOOD



GOOD

Drawing B

entry clothes; then a girl appears in a pale yellow wool dress. Or think of a bright sunrise in the background—no border lights or footlights—while darkly clad figures cross the stage. Also a dark stage with a single spot-light centered upon the playing space adds much to the effectiveness of a scene. Light and shade is used most carefully by all theatre artists as well as artists of the brush.

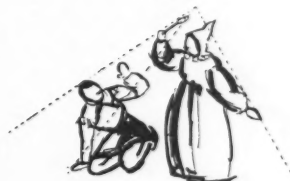
The importance of color in stage-pictures needs no argument. Everybody realizes that bright colors can be blended into a color; a single dominant color focuses attention upon an important point; a decided contrast in colors emphasizes stage colors must harmonize. If the director wishes the girl playing the villain to wear red, another girl playing the heroine must not ask to wear orange. It is necessary for colors also to be considered with the mood. A farce can usu-

ally have many and varied, vivid colors. A romantic play, however, will need softer, more subdued tones. The girl playing a very minor role must not sweep onto the stage in a stunning black creation. She will generate discord in the unity of the scheme as a whole. She must wear a subdued shade and leave black for the siren.

Interesting movement cannot be made a part of the painter's art, yet it figures strongly in stage pictures. Sometimes there is rhythmic movement of a group—exceeding effective. At other times there is simply a change of position for change of emphasis in the picture as the dialogue shifts. In this way, interest is added through movement. New pictures will thus be created as characters move about the stage. However, you are not striving to have stage-pictures all the way through the play. Several good pictures are enough. (See drawing C on this page.)



GOOD



GOOD



GOOD



BAD

Drawing C

Paul Green

by JOSEPH MERSAND

Department of English, Boys High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

PAUL GREEN'S activities as a dramatist have so many interesting ramifications that not one, but several essays might be written about them. At least six different aspects deserve some attention. They are:

1. His interest in folk drama.
2. His studies of negro life.
3. His dramas of social protest.
4. His participation in the intellectual renaissance of the New South.
5. His views on literary success.
6. His connection with Professor Frederick Koch and the Carolina Playmakers.

In addition, Paul Green is recognized as one of the outstanding American dramatists, judged by any critical standards. His plays are definitely a part of American theatrical history. In *Abraham's Bosom* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1926-1927. *The No 'Count Boy* won the Belasco Cup in the National Little Theatre Tournament of 1925. *The House of Connolly* was the first production of the now-famous Group Theatre of New York City. *Johnny Johnson* was voted by at least one critic of the New York Drama Critics Circle the most significant play of 1936. At the present time discussion is still going on in North Carolina over his recent play based on the Lost Colony. It is safe to say that a play of Paul Green is bound to rouse considerable discussion and is always treated with great respect by critics and public alike.

Throughout his playwrighting career, he has managed to hold his regular position as a member of the Department of Philosophy of the University of North Carolina. There are very few names in contemporary American drama of men who are both successful teachers and great creative artists. In the novel there is John Erskine; in poetry, Robert Hillyer, Joseph Auslander, and Robert Frost. Occasionally a famous teacher is not so successful as a dramatist. The disastrous failure of Professor Gustav Eckstein's *Christmas Eve* this current season is a sad case in point. It is said of Bernard Shaw that he is responsible for the remark: "He who can do; he who cannot teaches." Paul Green has given the lie to that observation. He has been extremely successful as a teacher, and it is the purpose of this essay to indicate his success as a dramatist. Fortunately he has given us several autobiographical statements of great interest and value, which will help us to understand and appreciate his work.

Of his birth and education he wrote:

"Born on a farm near Lillington, N. C., March 17, 1894. Farmed in the spring and summer and went to country school a few months in the winter. Later went to Buie's Creek Academy, from which he was graduated in 1914. Taught country school two years. Entered the University of North Carolina in 1916. Enlisted in the army in 1917. Served as private, corporal,

sergeant and sergeant-major with the 105th Engineers 30th Division. Later as second lieutenant at Paris. Served four months on the Western Front. Returned to the University of North Carolina in 1919. Was graduated from there in 1921. Did graduate work at his alma mater and at Cornell University. At present is a member of the faculty at the University of North Carolina."¹

Green's interest in drama was developed late in life. The first play he ever saw was a one-acter he himself had written when he was a freshman in a prize competition at the University. Prior to that his entire reading in dramatic literature was confined to *Hamlet* and part of *Julius Caesar*. As the critic Barrett H. Clark has said, "I know of nothing else of the kind in all theatrical history." Genius evidently needs little Latin and less Greek, as Ben Johnson said of Shakespeare.

In spite of the fact that Green did not become a dramatist by filling his mind with a multitude of plays and by devouring all the text-books on the technique of the drama, he has finally emerged as one of the dozen great contemporary American dramatists. Burns Mantle in his *Contemporary American Dramatists* summarizes his position among critics quite accurately:

"He is ruled by a passion for truthfulness and simplicity, his sense of drama is sure and fine and his insight into human character both searching and understanding."

These qualities are not derived from the study of text-books on the drama. In fact one of the cardinal tenets of his most inspiring teacher, Professor Koch, is that no text-books need be used in courses in the writing of plays. He advises his students to describe in dialogue life as they know it. The polishing comes later, and the dramatic form evolves naturally from the material. The traits of a burning desire for truth and simplicity are characteristic not only of the plays but of the playwright himself. That is why his plays deserve careful study by younger lovers of the drama. Those who have no confidence in their creative powers because they are still young or adolescent might well turn to Green's rules for literary success:

"Stay at home, read books, ignore artificial critical standards and keep a steady job. Those are my precepts for youngsters who want to write. They're the only rules for success I've known, and I've followed them religiously. Even if I made a fortune—which does not seem likely—I'd keep my little old job in the University in Chapel Hill and go on living the simple life in the sticks."²

Let us examine his dramatic output to date to determine its value for students on secondary school or college level. Since

¹ Quoted from Barrett H. Clark, *An Introduction to the Plays of Paul Green in Lonesome Road*, New York, McBride, 1926, p. lx.

² Mantle, *Contemporary American Playwrights*, New York, Dodd, Mead, 1938, p. 75.

1920 he has written six long plays and about forty one-act plays. He has also written one novel. His *Last of the Lowries*, composed in 1919, was the first of his plays to be produced by the Carolina Playmakers, the organization founded by Professor Koch for the production of plays written by his students. Although Green was only in his early twenties when he wrote it, and although it is imitative and shows marks of his immaturity, it has been considered worthy of reprinting in an anthology of one-act plays, *More One-Act Plays*, edited by Dr. Helen Louis Cohen, of New York City. His *No 'Count Boy* has been reprinted in several anthologies. *The Last of the Lowries* reminds readers of J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*. In both plays an old mother has to endure the successive loss of all of her sons. In the Irish play they perish in the sea; in the American play, they are outlawed and are killed by the authorities. In both cases, the clothes of the dead sons bring the terrible news of their death. Even in this early play Green already reveals his interest in the simple tragedies of the colorful folk who have not been affected by the artificial civilization of the large cities. He himself did not leave his farm until his twenty-fourth year and he has never outgrown his dislike for the life in the metropolis. Green comes only rarely to New York, and often he does not attend the premieres of his own plays.

His *No 'Count Boy* is one of the many plays of negro life in which he always expresses a deep human sympathy and a remarkable power of observation of their speech, their behaviour, their innermost thoughts and aspirations. The 'count boy is a young negro lad of seventeen slightly touched in the head. He plays the harmonica beautifully, and is read in travel booklets of far-off cities. Through his music and his glib talk he almost persuades a young negress to leave her home and her very practical father and go wandering over the country. The characters are brought back to reality with a thud when the mother of the boy enters and drags him back home, beating him for telling another of his stories. The boy cries for Ophelia, she like him sobs for him, because with his departure went her own romantic dreams.

Green's *In Abraham's Bosom* (1926) and *Hymn to the Rising Sun* (1936) are more bitter portraits of negro characters. In the former the dramatist portrays a negro of mixed blood, who tries to rise from books in order that he might prove his own position as well as that of his racial comrades. But he is frustrated at every turn. The school which he attends is closed after he has beaten a calcitrant scholar. He works for many years in a town, only to become eventually to go back to his land. In a fit of anger he kills his master, finally shot by the avenging policeman turns out to be a wastrel.



Scene from the student-written, student-directed, and student-produced fantasy entitled, *THE MAGIC TOUCH*, at Lorain, Ohio, Senior High School. Mr. Paul Marks, director of dramatics.

even in its reading is intensely moving. It is included in the *Pulitzer Prize Plays* edited by Coe (Random House, 1936). It is not surprising that the Committee awarded the prize to Green, even though he was practically unknown and could not persuade a commercial producer to offer it. It was originally performed in a tiny theatre on MacDougall Alley, which had originally been a stable. The famous Provincetown Theatre after it moved from Provincetown, occupied this stable for several years. Many famous American plays, including Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones* had their premieres in this theatre. It still exists today and the W. P. A. Federal Theatre used it for a time.

Hymn to the Rising Sun is a devastating picture of life in a Southern prison. One critic has said of it, "it is a demoniac picture of the brutality and degradation of a southern chain gang."³ A negro prisoner has been placed into a "sweat-box" for breaking some minor rule. He dies from his inhuman confinement. In his long play, *The House of Connolly* (1931) Green pictures the decline of a once-aristocratic Southern family and the intermarriage of the scion of the family and a girl of lower social position. It reveals his interest in all phases of southern life. He is no propagandist for the traditional South of the Colonels and the great juleps and the spirit of gallantry. He writes truthfully what he sees. His technique is quite simple. When asked by a young reporter what he thought of dramatic technique he replied:

"I haven't any dramatic technique; I merely tell the story, episode by episode. It seems to me to be a matter of trying to force a story into a definite shape."⁴

³ Eleanor Flexner, *The American Drama Since 1918*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1938, p. 305.

⁴ Everett H. Clark, Paul Green, New York, McBride, 1938, p. 10.

nite mold, demanding three well-divided scenes, with a climax, for each curtain and a cut and dried dénouement."⁴

The episodic nature of his long plays is especially noticeable in *In Abraham's Bosom*, which is in six scenes and in *Johnny Johnson* (1936) which has even more. This last play is Green's contribution to the rich literature resulting from the First World War. In it he pictures a simple, honest American boy who is filled with patriotism largely as a result of reading and believing President Wilson's speeches. Because he takes everything so literally he gets into difficulties constantly. The play is satirical and fan-

tastic. One of the most fantastic scenes represents Johnny's entrance into the office of the Allied General Headquarters and spraying laughing gas from a flit-gun while the generals are holding an important conference. They are convulsed with laughter and forget their slaughter for a while. After the War, Johnny is sent to an asylum. He forms a crazy debating society among his fellow-inmates. Finally he is released. At the end of the play we find him singing in the streets and selling pencils for a living. This play aroused considerable discussion in New York. It did not have a long run but some critics thought very highly of it. Professor O'Hara, of Chicago University, has written of it:

"Laughter is not absent from Paul Green's attack on war in his earnestly satiric extravaganza, *Johnny Johnson*, with its score by the expatriated Kurt Weill. Like a bitter comic strip with music, this work has some of Aristophanes' gusty lampoonery along with caricatures so true that they are poignant, although Green's play ends, similarly to *Idiot's Delight*, on the eve of catastrophe. Johnny's boy-scout grandson explaining that 'Daddy says we're in for a terrible war and all the people have got to be ready to keep the enemy from destroying us'."⁵

Paul Green at forty-six is still teaching at the University. His plays still reveal his intellectual honesty and his artistic courage. He hopes to present the truth as he sees it, more dramatic, more perfectly expressed than it is in real life, more significant for the present and the future. He has demonstrated that New York City does not breed all the American dramatists, that one can have a great vision of life while spending most of one's life on a farm, and that wisdom can come to not only in the halls of learning, but from long and serious thinking over the problems of existence.

⁵ Today in *American Drama*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1939, p. 259.

Certificates to be Awarded Winners of State and Regional Drama Tournaments

Attractive Certificates of Excellence in Dramatics, bearing the blue and gold insignia of the society, will be presented this spring by The National Thespian Society to all high schools that receive highest honors in their State or Regional Drama Festivals and Contests. Awards will be made to all schools that receive first, second, or third place, or highest rating (Superior or Excellent) in the finals of an interstate or state tournament, or in a regional tournament with at least eight schools participating, if such an event is not part of a state-wide tournament.

Schools entitled to these certificates are urged to write The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio. Each request must be accompanied with a statement from the Tournament Sponsor and a copy of the program showing that the school in question has been awarded highest honors as described above.

Make Drama Vitalize Your Assemblies

by ARISTELLE MACDONALD

Director of Dramatics, Franklin High School, Seattle, Washington.

DOES the assembly problem worry you? Do you sometimes wonder how to combine entertainment with instruction? What constitutes a program worthy of the time you have put in? If you have had these problems, too, perhaps our experiment in painless assembly instruction may interest you.

For some time we have been faced with the fact that our student body has not been receiving enough help with the task of planning its courses of study. Maybe you have struggled with your own study plan. You realize it may not be the easiest thing in the world to sit down and say to yourself, "All right, I intend to be an architect (or a lawyer, or a Safeway clerk); now I must decide right here what subjects I will take in school for the next four years." Such a conference with yourself means that you *do* know what you want to do after you graduate from school. But a census in our school showed that fewer than half of our student body really were sure of the careers they will follow. Then, granted you have chosen your future, there comes the question of which combinations of high school subjects will best contribute to your preparation for that choice.

We canvassed the school to find out what could be done to make it simpler for people to become future-minded and we learned that it would help a great deal if the students could see some courses planned before their very eyes. So we determined to arrange an assembly program through our Guidance Department which would take the point of view of four or five pupils of different interests

and think out their program-planning problems on the stage where everyone could watch the process of their development.

We got together a series of short but very dramatic scenes as the basis for holding the student interest. The first scene featured a hospital nurse receiving an emergency patient and getting him ready for the surgery. The patient was a young newsboy who had been run over by a speeding automobile. His leg had been broken. The nurse encourages him to be sturdy and brave and relieves his mind about worries over losing his job and taking care of his mother.

The second scene revealed a business office in which a man was interviewing applicants for a position. Three types of girls were interviewed: one who was both careless about her appearance, and unaware of the attitude that people expect in the business world; one who seemed to be a possibility until her high school record was considered (it disclosed that she had not been adequately prepared in the commercial course for office work because she changed her mind too many times about the line she would follow); and one whom the employer was satisfied with because of her business-like, quiet manner, her high school record, her pleasing, conservative appearance, and her understanding of office procedure.

The third scene revealed a dramatic incident in the home of an engineer who returns one evening from work to tell his wife how the bridge he was responsible for constructing had collapsed that day, killing two people and injuring others. The

man for whom he had done the work didn't seem to blame him, but the engineer himself realized that he had made a mistake, ever so slight, in his mathematical calculations which altered the carrying load of the bridge by tons. He makes the point that people who are responsible for human life can't be careless, and, therefore, those who want to be engineers must realize that their training begins far back in their school preparation in mathematics.

The fourth scene was a humorous sketch about a plumber. It was introduced as entertainment relief but also gave us our chance to insert a program for the trade course.

So far, our program was designed for audience interest with careful attention to stressing the need for preparing in high school for the future one intends to follow. Now we decided to show how a student should go about this. For the purpose we had an immense program-card built that would look just like the card each pupil uses in his roll-room for outlining his plan of study. This form is called a Four-year Plan Card. It has eight sections with spaces in each for filing in the subjects for each semester. The large assembly card was made of three-ply with a white poster board covering so that the lines and printing could be painted on it. The board measures seven and one-third feet by nine and one-third feet, with subject spaces five and one-half inches by twenty-four inches. Each subject space has two nails for hanging the subject cards in place. The cards were heavily lettered in black so they could be read easily from the back of our large auditorium.

Next we outlined a proper and balanced course of study to fit the needs of a person who would be preparing for each of the professions featured in the dramatic sketches.

The dramatic scenes were given center of the stage and were mounted on a medium elevation with a modified curtain opening. The announcer had a speaker's stand in front of the curtain stage-left, and our large program board was on stage-right in front of the curtain. The coordinating announcer was located in the back-stage broadcasting room with his auditorium microphone and a push button for cue warnings.

The general announcer explained to the audience that we proposed to offer suggestions that might be helpful in making plans for the future. He further made it clear that the following morning the tire school would be making out four-year plan cards in the roll-rooms, and there was some instruction in the assembly program that would guide pupils in their work. He explained the type of program briefly, and as he concluded, the curtain opened on the first scene. On the last line the coordinating announcer's voice came over the speaker asking

(Continued on page 12)

FRANKLIN FOUR YEAR PLAN							
Name _____	Date _____	Cr _____	Age _____				
Gr Sch _____	Jr H _____	Course _____	NURSING				
1st Yr	2nd Yr	3rd Yr	4th Yr	1st Yr	2nd Yr	3rd Yr	4th Yr
LIT. I	LIT. II	LIT. III	COMP. IV	LIT. I	LIT. II	LIT. III	COMP. IV
C. LIFE	W. HIST. I	A. HIST. I	CHOIR	C. LIFE	W. HIST. I	A. HIST. I	CHOIR
G. SCI. I	BOT. I	CHEM. I	FOODS I	G. SCI. I	BOT. I	CHEM. I	FOODS I
ALG. I	GEOM. I	FOR. LAN. I		ALG. I	GEOM. I	FOR. LAN. I	
COMP. I	COMP. II	COMP. III		COMP. I	COMP. II	COMP. III	
G. SCI. II	W. HIST. II	A. HIST. II	HEALTH	G. SCI. II	W. HIST. II	A. HIST. II	HEALTH
ALG. II	BOT. II	CHEM. II	CHOIR	ALG. II	BOT. II	CHEM. II	CHOIR
PEN & SP.	GEOM. II	FOR. LAN. II	FOODS II	PEN & SP.	GEOM. II	FOR. LAN. II	FOODS II

Four-year plan card described in Miss MacDonald's article on this page.



Thespians appearing in the production of *HEADED FOR EDEN* at Robbinsdale, Minn., Senior High School. Directed by Miss Bess Sinnott.

Rhythm and Speech Improvement

by EDWARD THOMAS

Director of Dramatics, Central High School, Parkersburg, W. Va.

FOR the past five years as an instructor in Speech and Dramatics, it has been my privilege to be associated with a great number of foreign children and children of foreign born parents. During this time I have observed that these children, as well as many of our native sons and daughters, suffer from many speech handicaps. From the standpoint of culture or euphonics the two chief problems are: first, the lack of rhythm, that is their speech moves with a rapid staccato rhythm and second, many speech sounds are improperly produced. Important as the second problem is, only the first, defective rhythm, will furnish the material for this brief discussion.

One who is untrained in the techniques of remedial speech training usually attempts to correct staccato rhythm by telling the speaker to talk more slowly. To be sure, the rate of English proper is much slower than that of Italian, German or the Central European languages, but admonitions to speak more slowly when given without more specific suggestions rarely obtain results. In order to be effective, remedial measures must be designed to counteract the factors that contribute to the complex whole, known as staccato rhythm.

On an acoustic analysis of this, diction reveals three specific deviations from English proper which, when combined, are accountable for the characteristic rhythm. These deviations are: first, a shortening of the vowels in stressed syllables. Second, a prolongation of the vowels in unstressed syllables. Third, a failure to blend the sound of one word with the initial sound of the next within a meaningful group. Each of these deviations is a carryover from other languages, and re-

education in speech rhythm demands that careful training be directed toward eradicating each and all of them.

In English there are three elements involved in stress or accent: pitch, force, and duration. For example, in the word "student", the first syllable is higher in pitch, more forceful and much longer in time than the second. In many of the foreign languages which the children hear and very often speak, pitch seems to be the most important factor in stress, and deviation the least important. So the carryover to English of this sameness of vowel duration accounts for the first two problems mentioned above.

The blending of one English word with another is achieved largely through the final consonants in the word. For instance, the phrase, "You and I" is spoken as though it were one word made up of three syllables, "You-and-I", and if this easy-going swing of the English language is not stressed we find in its place a choppy, staccato movement.

However, one may have come to use this peculiar staccato rhythm, and the important question is, "What can be done about it?" The first important thing is to provide rhythm patterns in the classroom and at the same time secure as far as possible, proper speech rhythm from the children. To this end several suggestions may prove helpful.

First of all, consider the lengthening and shortening of vowels in stressed and unstressed syllables, respectively. As each word is taught in the lower grades, it should be presented as it is pronounced in a group of words and not as though it always stands by itself. For example, in the sentence, "The boy has a pony," if we blend the last consonant of "has" with the

vowel "a" which follows, the syllables become, "The boy ha za po ny," with considerable time given to the vowels in "boy," "ha," and "po," and very little time given to those in "the," "za," and "ny". In fact, the last three vowels are little more than grunts. The rhythm and melody of the sentence may be represented by lines whose lengths indicate the relative pitches, (the higher the tone the higher the pitch,) thus:

The boy po
 ha
 za
 ny

How different this diagram would look if the vowels in the stressed syllables were made short, if the vowels in "the" and "a" were given the lengths of "e" and "a" in the alphabet as they are when the words are pronounced by themselves. And how incorrect the sentence sounds when it is spoken after this pattern.

The objectives in teaching such a group of words are: To secure the marked prolongation of the stressed vowels; to secure the shortening of the unstressed vowels and to secure the blending of words. In order to produce a stressed vowel accurately, the mouth must be so opened that there is a considerable distance between the upper and lower front teeth, whereas in producing a vowel in an unstressed syllable, the mouth must be almost closed. Or to express these relationships differently, since the accurate production of a stressed vowel requires that the mouth be opened somewhat, stressed syllables cannot be spoken very rapidly, and since unstressed syllables must be spoken very rapidly, one does not have time to open the mouth widely for their production. The problem of securing long stressed vowels, then, as one of my students noticed, is a matter not only of hearing and knowing what is right but also getting one's mouth open.

In order to gain this appreciation of the relative vowel lengths, I would like to suggest, that a teacher, beginning with the first grade, should give considerable time to drills in both hearing and producing



Cast for the production of *320 COLLEGE AVENUE* at Alton, Ill., Community High School (Thespian Troupe No. 126).
Directed by Miss Mildred Rutledge.

phrases and sentences, the teacher speaking the group of words first, and the pupil repeating them after him. In doing this, care must be taken in pronouncing the vowels in the unstressed syllables in order that they will be properly shortened.

An understanding of a fact that is not commonly known proves very helpful in developing the shortened vowels. This fact is that a word used in a phrase is so affected by the words that precede and follow it, that frequently it is not pronounced as it is when it stands alone. In this connection consider the words "was", "to", "of", "a", "and", "the" and "from". Rarely is one of these words used in the stressed position as it is when it stands alone. Therefore, from the standpoint of better speech they should be taught in phrases and sentences where they are commonly used. The following sentences will illustrate the point.

The boy **WAS** hurt.
You **AND** I
THE front of A house.
He wished **TO** go.
Give THE book **TO** THE teacher.
He came **FROM** THE city.

In these phrases and sentences, the vowels in the capitalized words are all pronounced with the sound of "a", as in *SOFA*, which is a mere grunt. However, only with considerable phonetic study can one gain a real appreciation of the importance of the shortened vowel as a factor in good speech rhythm.

I would also like to suggest, at this time, that you listen to any person who speaks English well, and you will hear that the final sounds of several of the words are really the initial sounds of the following words. For example, "A boy and a girl" and "You and I" will sound like this:

boy girl boy girl
A an A an
an da an da
dl dl
You an You an
an an

But I might go further than this and say that whenever you do not hear such

blending, you are not hearing good English.

The ability of the student to acquire the correct blending, like the acquisition of proper duration of vowels, is dependent upon hearing it done, being convinced that it is right, and practicing it in specific speech situations. I have found the high school Thespian club and other dramatic activities an ideal place for this practice. The teacher of remedial English speech, therefore, should blend the words in the speech drills and in the dramatic work; call the students attention to the blends used, and should induce the pupils to blend their words.

All of this requires drill, a procedure that necessitates time and patience. However, as far as I know, there is no way either to acquire a new language or to relearn one that has been improperly learned except by application and practice. If good spoken English is desirable—and some persons think it is—there seems to be no way to achieve it except by a direct and concerted attack upon poorly spoken English as we find it in the classroom.

Make Drama Vitalize Your Assemblies

(Continued from page 10)

might interview the nurse briefly about her profession. She, speaking directly to the audience, answered his questions simply and in character. The questions concerned the hours her profession required, the pay, etc., and finally the preparation she had to have before entering the work. Here the general announcer interrupted to recommend that he be allowed to plan a suggested high school program that would be useful to persons with this future in mind. Then the spotlight came up on the program board and as the announcer named the subjects required for such a course, the monitors quickly hung them in place and stepped aside so the

audience could see them. Each monitor handled one-half of the board and worked with such quiet speed that the announcer was able to talk at a normal rate and have his words illustrated as he spoke. When the first program was complete, it was left before the audience while the announcer stressed a few points about why certain elective subjects were advisable, thus giving the students a chance to get the entire plan well in mind.

When the light dimmed off the cast and the announcer, the curtains opened on the second scene. After the commercial program was planned, we had a musical number and at its conclusion planned a music course, and so on through the rest of the courses.

We would like to recommend such a form of assembly to you if your program have been lacking in interest or if you run out of ideas. We think the plan fits into many different places in the school. For instance, we are at work now on an assembly we call "Conservation." It treats in much the same way, the question of preserving our natural resources for the people who are to come after us. We are immediately interested in caring for our school buildings and grounds for the generations of students. But we're fundamentally concerned with the future of our country and making its preservation a matter of personal pride and responsibility. It is an even more exciting program to plan and work out than we had expected. And we're making use of all the theatrical devices we can. Our students who really love acting in theatre are learning that when your program has a living message to convey, makes acting and production a breathing, vital reality instead of a play-time for children. We hope to try our experiment or something like it soon, if you haven't already done so.

Staging the High School Play

This department is designed to assist teachers in choosing, casting, and producing plays on the high school level. Suggestions as to plays which should be discussed next or how this department can be of greater assistance to teachers will be welcomed.

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Thespian National Director and Director of Dramatics at Berea College, Berea, Ky.

Seven Keys to Baldpate

by DONALD WOODS

Hibbing, Minn., High School

IN a recent play review, George Jean Nathan, the drama critic, called *Seven Keys to Baldpate* the best play of the year 1913. It was a good play in 1913, and it is just as good a play in 1940. There is nothing out-dated about it, and the fact that it is suitable for high school production will keep it alive for years to come.

Seven Keys to Baldpate was adapted by George M. Cohan from an Earl Derr Biggers novel. It was definitely adapted so as to star Mr. Cohan, and directors might profitably keep this fact in mind when casting the play, for the leading male role can make or break the play. Published by Samuel French, the play carries a royalty of twenty-five dollars.

On the title page of *Seven Keys to Baldpate* is a brief description of the play: a mysterious melodramatic farce—in a prologue, two acts and an epilogue. In the prologue, the groundwork for the plot is laid:

When the curtains first open, we see in the moonlight the deserted lobby of Baldpate Inn, a summer hostelry high in the mountains. The howling wind lets us know that a winter storm is raging outside. A lantern appears outside the big double doors. After much fumbling at the lock, in come Mr. and Mrs. Quimby, the owners of the hotel. They have had instructions to open the hotel in readiness for the stay of a young New York author. In due time, the author-hero arrives half frozen. He tells the Quimbys of a wager he has made that he can write a complete novel within twenty-four hours and that he has chosen Baldpate Inn as the place for such an effort, because he feels he will not be disturbed at that lonely spot. When the Quimbys leave they give the author, William Hallowell Magee, the key to the inn, telling him that it is the only key in existence which can open the hotel. Magee then turns out the lobby lights and goes upstairs to begin work as the curtain falls on the prologue. It remains down for only ten seconds. Its rise marks the beginning of Act One. It develops that Magee does not have the only key. A group of crooked politicians (brilliantly drawn by Cohan and Biggers) have hidden graft money in the inn. And where there are crooks, a bewitching lady blackmailer, a charming young news reporter, a romantic widow, a blustering chief of police and his assistants, a demented hermit undoubtedly have the ingredients of a stirring melodrama. The poor author becomes entangled in the wild dealings and is to finish his novel, but near the conclusion of Act Two, the owner of the hotel explains that the crooks and all others were not real but only actors from a stock company, engaged to keep Magee from finishing his book and also to show him how his own plots would appear if they actually occurred in life. Although Magee has not finished his book, he has at least met Mary Norton, a stock company actress who depicted

DONALD WOODS

It gives me pleasure to present Donald Woods, sponsor of Troupe 272, to the readers of this department's page. Mr. Woods is a Thespian in his own right, having been a very loyal member of Troupe 165 of Eveleth, Minnesota, where he began his dramatic training in the high school and junior college. He completed his work for the A. B. degree at the State University of Iowa, and the next school year was teaching in the high school in West Union, Iowa, where he established Troupe 183. Since then Mr. Woods has taught in Oelwein, Iowa. This past fall he was elected to the Hibbing High School staff. He is doing graduate work in Speech and Dramatics in the University of Minnesota.

I am sure that all of you who read Mr. Woods' article agree that he has made *Seven Keys to Baldpate* sound extremely interesting as a future production possibility. It so happens that I saw this play done by a stock company in Madison, Wisconsin, some twenty years ago, and I have never forgotten how it held my intense interest from first curtain to last. I most heartily endorse Mr. Woods in his enthusiasm for this play.

Contributions such as this one will be welcomed by the editor of this page.—EARL W. BLANK.

the role of the news reporter. After this dénouement, the curtain falls on Act Two and rises thirty seconds later on the epilogue. The lobby is just as it appeared at the end of the prologue. The Quimbys again arrive by lantern light. Magee comes downstairs and lets them in. In his conversation with the Quimbys and in a telephone call to New York City, it is learned that all the wild excitement of the preceding two acts had not actually existed at all but was merely an "imaginary enactment" of the plot that Magee was typing for his novel. In other words, the audience has witnessed a "book in action," in which Magee has written himself as the hero and built a lively plot of intrigue around himself, winding up his book as a joke on his readers. It isn't easy to imagine a more cleverly constructed melodrama than Cohan and Biggers put into *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, and for that reason I have treated the plot at some length.

A few slight changes in the lines and situations will perhaps be needed for some productions. The profanity may be easily cut without damaging the play. At the

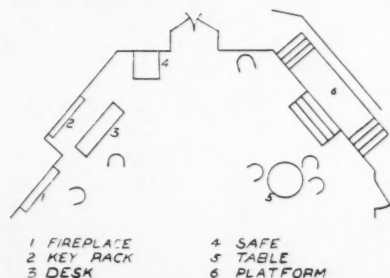


Diagram of stage set for *SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE*.

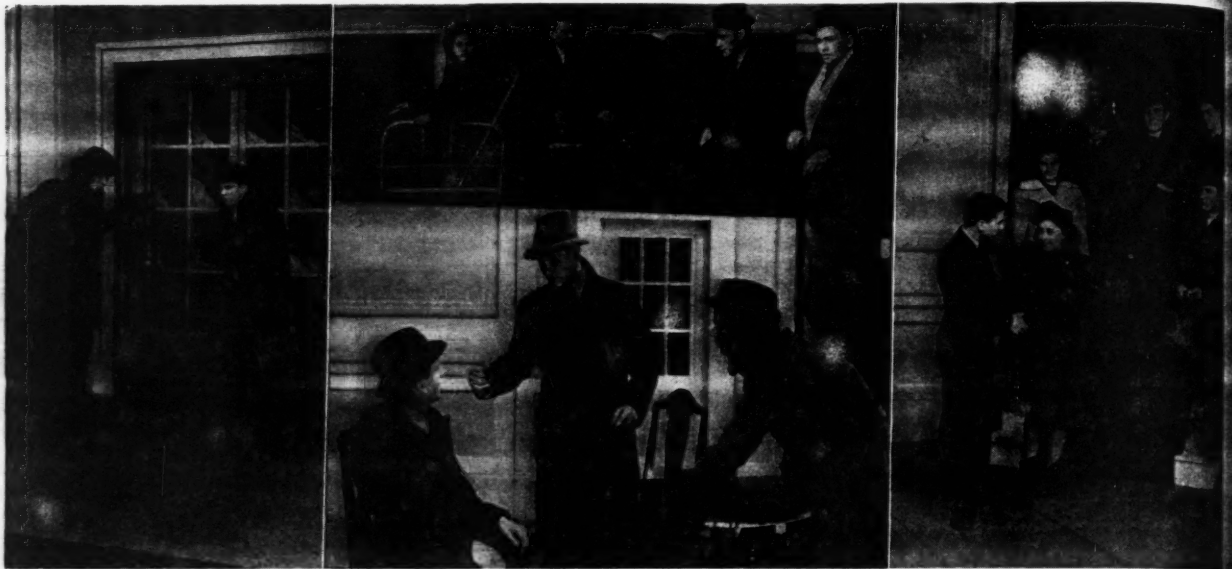
end of Act I, Myra Thornhill (the black-mailer) is given the line, "Oh, go to hell!" Our school is quite broadminded, but, nevertheless, I felt that the line was just a little bit strong. We changed it to "Oh, shut your mouth!" Given the right treatment, the substitute lines has just as much punch as the original line.

In most high schools, it may also be wise to change the whisky drinking scenes a bit. Substitute hot coffee in a thermos bottle for the flask of whisky. The Quimbys have brought whisky with them on their arrival to Baldpate. It is to be used to warm up Magee when he arrives. It will be just as effective to use coffee, and it may perhaps be instrumental in avoiding criticism. The idea of substituting coffee for whisky was suggested to me by the superintendent of the school at which I first produced *Seven Keys to Baldpate*.

As I see it, the play has one slight drawback for high school production, and that is that the casting is a bit lop-sided, inasmuch as there are only four roles for women and eleven for men. In casting, remember that the role of Magee, the hero-author, entails the memorization of about 330 speeches, many of which are lengthy. Cast a person who finds memory work easy for this role. Try to get your male roles filled by fellows who are fairly good sized. It is difficult to make a fragile boy look like a dangerous crook.

The costuming is simple. Winter coats, overshoes, gloves, mittens, all clearly indicate the temperature of the inn and the season of the year. After the blaze in the fireplace has warmed the lobby, the black-mailer may take off her fur coat, displaying a black, slinky evening gown. The gown used in the production here at the Hibbing High School was made at a cost of only \$1.59 by the mother of the girl who played the blackmailer. The material used was sateen. In a previous production, a cerise gown was used effectively also. Peters, the hermit, wears a fur cap and a great shaggy fur coat. The more ferocious he can be made to look, the easier it is for him to put his characterization over. While a wig for Peters is not absolutely necessary, a "hermit wig" (about shoulder length, grayish, straggly) will be a very worthwhile rental. The policemen do not necessarily need uniforms, for they are members of a small town police force, where uniforms are usually a rarity. Police badges conspicuously displayed on their coats will indicate their positions emphatically. One of our local merchants very graciously lent two fur coats to us, and these garments also gave a dash of style to the costuming.

The scenery can be made elaborate or simple. In the play book, two choices are pictured: that of employing an elaborate balcony, and a more simple method. I like the more simple method because it is more economical. In the simplified setting, a short flight of stairs reaches to a landing which leads off both left and right to the various rooms.



Scenes from the production of *SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE* at the Hibbing, Minn., Senior High School. Directed by Mr. Donald Wood.

A practical safe is needed. By good fortune, one had been built of light lumber for our stage for some previous play. It was built to look very massive, but in reality it is very light; its exterior is painted black and its interior aluminum. If a safe cannot be built or borrowed, there is still another possibility. Almost all stage sets have a particular flat designated to stand behind the fireplace. This flat is built with a section that can be removed if an opening is required behind the fireplace. Put this removable section on hinges so that it can be swung inward (toward on-stage). Paint the improvised safe door black, tack a dial from an old radio set on its center, place a good sized box, the inside of which has been painted black, behind the opening, and your built-in vault is complete.

The hotel desk and key rack will not be difficult to acquire or to fake. Often times old office furniture can be borrowed. The school library may have a piece of furniture that will serve as a hotel desk. A very modernistic desk can be made by standing a piece of wall-board on its side, bending it into an arc, and nailing it to an ordinary table. If possible, have the table placed on a raised platform of the same size as the table before the wall-board is tacked on. Thus, it will not be necessary to cut the wall board down, and it will also make a higher and more convincing desk. If part of your audience will be in a balcony, it may be well to cut a section out of another piece of wall-board so as to cover the top of the improvised desk.

Avoid using any "homey touches" in the setting. Remember that the hotel is deserted—closed for the winter, and that everything of any value has been packed away.

The lighting cues are of utmost im-

portance. I have produced *Seven Keys to Baldpate* under widely different circumstances, once where lighting equipment was at a minimum and another time where I had a very fine control board, and in both cases, the results were very satisfactory, although the work was much simpler and the results a bit more effective with the more complete switchboard. The lighting is not difficult, but must be timed very carefully. Moonlight at the door is essential. A baby spot in the fireplace is very helpful when the fire is to be lighted. General dim lighting can be used throughout the play with occasional use of a brighter lighting wherever the script calls for it. If you do not have a dimmer to keep the lighting dim, try using only blue lights, and very few of them. Then when the actors supposedly switch on the lights in the lobby, your electrician can turn on your white border. Caution any actor who uses the light switch on stage to keep his finger on the light switch for a moment or two so that the stage electrician may have time to get the white border on. Otherwise, the actor may push the switch, hurriedly take his hand away, and discover to his chagrin that the light doesn't get turned on until a fraction of a second later. If you must use footlights, use them sparingly, letting most of the light come from overhead. If you use real lanterns and oil lamps in your production, caution your cast as to the fire risk that is involved.

And now for comments on the acting. None of the characters are very subtly drawn, and their work is clearly laid out for them in their lines. The male lead (Magee) is a very personable, debonaire chap, who acts his role with a flashy, speedy jauntiness. I advise against letting him take himself too seriously, for it may be recalled that George M. Cohan, for

whom the role was created, is primarily a comedian, and he naturally tried to make the part as light and gay as possible. At all costs, keep things moving. Part of the success of the play depends on the rapidity with which it can be played—without rushing it, of course. Be sure that all cues are picked up rapidly and that there are no tardy entrances. We play the show in an hour and forty minutes.

The play adapts itself easily to an advertising campaign. Just before an assembly program, we secreted several keys beneath certain auditorium chairs. Then, after the audience had filed in and just before the regular program was to begin, an announcement was made that unless several more keys were located, it was feared that the class play, scheduled for the next week, could not be given. The audience was told that word had been received from the police station that the missing keys were hidden under auditorium seats and that the finders would be given free tickets for the show. At this point in the announcement, the students and faculty members searched beneath their chairs for the lucky key. This and other simple advertising strategies helped to secure an enthusiastic audience.

In preparing your program, indicate very clearly that the play is in four acts. Audiences are accustomed to three plays, and there may be a tendency for them to start to leave the auditorium following the end of Act II, with its apparently final ending. Such an occurrence can also be controlled by leaving the house in darkness except for the intermission between Acts I and II.

Mr. William Ratican, stage manager of the Hibbing High School, assisted in the production, for he had produced the play several times with professional companies.

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Motion Picture Appreciation

EDITED BY HAROLD TURNEY*

Chairman, Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College

YOUNG TOM EDISON

INTRODUCTION

AS a distinct departure in the usual presentation of feature films, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has produced two motion pictures based on incidents in the biography of a great American, Thomas A. Edison. The first of these has been named *Young Tom Edison*. Emphasizing the years from 1860 to 1864, it cinematizes the life of the great inventor through the troubled school days and up to the time when his use of the telegraph code had made him a hero instead of the town scapegoat.

With Norman Taurog, recent megaphonist on *Boys Town*, directing, *Young Tom Edison* boasts an excellent cast headed by Mickey Rooney as the boy Edison, Virginia Weidler as his sister, and Fay Bainter and George Bancroft as his mother and father.

The second feature picture in the series is titled *Edison, the Man*, with star Spencer Tracy as the elder Thomas A. Edison. It begins five years after the close of the preceding film and continues until 1882.

It is planned that several months will elapse between the first showings of the two pictures, although following the release of the latter film, many exhibitors probably will book the pictures into your local theaters to be shown together on double bills or on succeeding evenings.

Beyond doubt they will be two of our most popular pictures of the current season because they each star an outstanding box-office attraction. In a recent poll conducted by the *Motion Picture Herald*—*Fame*, Hollywood trade magazines, Mickey Rooney was adjudged by National Theater exhibitors the leading money-making star of 1939 and Spencer Tracy the third.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE FILM

All but one or two events in the picture are either accurately re-created from Thomas Edison's boyhood or based on his juvenile adventures and were selected because each pointed toward the climax of the story, allowing smoothness in continuity. Like the adaptation of any biography or novel, facts and situations must be dramatized for the film.

* * *

As a boy, Edison was familiarly called

"Al", but in the picture he is known as "Tom." Thomas was a family name while Alva honored a barge captain friend of his father.

* * *

Samuel Edison, father of Tom, was of strapping physique, as was his father. He was over six feet tall and unusually strong. He lived to be more than ninety years of age, and when past seventy he walked from Port Huron, Michigan, to Detroit, a distance of sixty miles. In his seventieth year, while visiting his son in New Jersey, he leaped twenty feet from a dock to keep from missing a ferry boat that was leaving.

Thomas Edison, was a frail child and looked hardly strong enough to attend school. He was rather grave with a mind active in constructive thinking or serious questioning.

In reality, Thomas attended school only three months of his life. Within his hearing, the teacher remarked that the child was "addled" and not capable of learning. Bursting into tears, the boy ran home and poured out his woes to his understanding mother. Mrs. Edison was a capable, well-informed woman who had been a teacher before her marriage, and she immediately assumed the responsi-

bility for her son's instruction. She taught him the rudiments of learning and guided him in his reading. Before he was twelve years of age he had read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and Hume's *History of England*. His father encouraged his reading by rewarding him with small sums of money when he had completed a particularly difficult book. His first science book, Richard Green Parker's *School of Natural Philosophy*, was given him at the age of nine by his mother.

* * *

Although Edison was equal to elementary mathematics, he never was proficient in this subject, and later, when coping with an experiment or invention requiring mathematical skill, had to depend upon his helpers.

* * *

Thomas' sister, Tannie, was actually older than he, but for the purpose of creating additional interest for the film, she is made the hero-worshiping younger sister.

* * *

In his cellar laboratory, Thomas labeled all of his two hundred bottles "poison" to caution other children, but when Mrs. Edison discovered that Tom's friends had investigated the bottles, she insisted that they be locked in a cupboard. Or, whenever the nook became untidy, she ordered that all the bottles be taken out-of-doors and only after tearful supplication did she relent.

* * *

Thomas' two obsessions were chemistry and books. At the drug store he could buy the usual chemicals, but when he became butcher on the train and traveled



Mickey Rooney portrays Thomas A. Edison as a boy in *Young Tom Edison*.

AUTHOR of *How Cartoons Are Made, An Analysis of Dramatic Construction, Direction, and Film Guides*, *Lincoln in Illinois*, *The Blue Bird*, *Geronimo*, *River*, *The Great Victor Herbert*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Little Old New York*, *The Great Gatsby*, and other motion picture study plans.

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to Detroit, he was delighted that he could purchase more potent compounds. He became an avid reader and collected a splendid library.

Unlike most scientists, he had an instinctive knack for making money, and worked hard to earn it; but like other scientists, he never considered the value of money. He early exhibited this aptitude for ferreting out jobs. When at the age of twelve, he obtained a concession on the Grand Trunk Railroad selling confections. He left Port Huron at seven-thirty each morning and arrived home that night at nine-thirty, having made a round trip to Detroit, a distance of 126 miles.

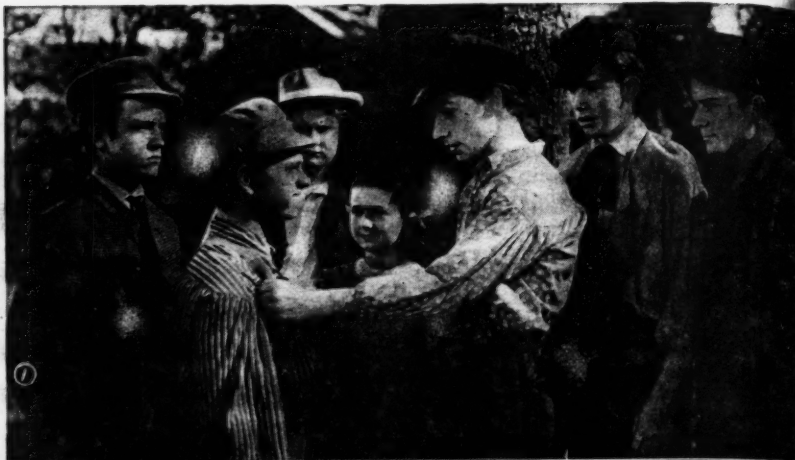
His next step was to arrange with the Detroit newspaper office to sell papers on the return trip, and then enlist a number of small boys in Port Huron to help him peddle on the streets those left unsold. One bit of news which Thomas and his cohorts shouted in newsboy style was the election of Lincoln to the Presidency. Soon after Tom began to work, the railroad put on a second train which made a round trip from Detroit each day, passing the first train enroute. The young business man hired another boy as butcher on the second train. In addition, he had two baskets of fresh fancy fruits and vegetables placed on the train at Detroit each morning, and employed a boy to take the produce from the train to a small stall where another boy sold it. Encouraged by this success, during berry season he became a jobber, shipping the fruit to Detroit and maintaining his corner in Port Huron. When a third train was scheduled, he again established a newsboy in his employ. From all these activities, young Tom often made several dollars a day and always gave one to his mother, reserving the others for chemicals and books.

* * *

During the Civil War the employer newsboy discovered that his papers sold better when they contained battle news. At Detroit he read the galley proofs each day, then wired ahead concerning important struggles, promising full details in the papers. One day in April, 1862, a particularly terrific battle took place, and Edison foresaw an enormous sale. He inveigled the editor to raise his order from 300 to 1000, with a promise to pay him the next day. His judgment was correct. This edition was in such demand that Tom raised the price at each station until the papers sold at twenty-five cents in Port Huron.

* * *

Thomas had a friend named James Clancy who also was interested in telegraphy. The two boys extended a stove wire between their homes and improvised an apparatus over which they were



SCENES FROM M. G. M. PHOTOPLAY

1. Tom Edison gets a challenge. 2. Tom tells the engineer that he (Tom) can give a warning in Morse Code on the train whistle to a train approaching from the opposite direction. 3. Tom tells his sister that one can't mix hydrochloric acid and ammonia.

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MICKEY ROONEY IN THE TITLE ROLE.

4. Tom gets into a fight. 5. Tom explains to his father and sister his idea for an improvement in the telegraph. 6. The Edisons, mother and son, with Fay Bainter in the role of the mother.

able to send messages by means of the Morse code. They became so engrossed in their enterprise that they worked far into the night. Samuel Edison emphatically demanded that Tom be in bed by eleven-thirty. Usually Tom's papers were not all sold until eleven o'clock, and a half hour would not be nearly enough time to practice telegraphy. He hit upon a plan! Instead of bringing unsold papers home for his father to read, Tom left the papers at James' home, then received the news via Morse code as sent by James. Mr. Edison became so entranced with the ordeal, he forgot about time. After two or three evenings thus engaged, Samuel Edison gave Tom permission to practice as late as he liked if he only would bring the papers home!

* * *

There are two versions explaining the cause of Edison's deafness. Most stories attribute the condition to a boxing on the ears given by the railroad conductor, but Edison is said to have thought that the affliction was caused by the conductor pulling him aboard a moving train by the ears. The film utilizes both.

* * *

Thomas did publish the "Weekly Herald," printing it on a second-hand press purchased in Detroit. This he did in the baggage car during his spare time.

* * *

Those mannerisms of constantly keeping his hands in his pockets when they were not otherwise employed and pulling at his left eyebrow when in deep thought, so well brought to the audience's observation in the picture, are authentic. Throughout his life, Edison's favorite dishes were apple pie and milk. His best loved musical selection was "Genevieve" so effectively used in the film.

* * *

Tom's first scientific knowledge of telegraphy was gleaned from Parker's *School of Natural Philosophy* which devoted ten pages to Professor Morse's invention. It was here he gained his information on how to make a telegraph line and put it in operation. Later, as a reward for saving his three-year-old son, the local telegrapher, Mr. Mackenzie, offered to teach Tom telegraphy and give him a dinner every day for three months. The boy eagerly accepted, and thereafter, twice a day while the train stopped at Mount Clemens, he went to the telegraph table and studied under his self-appointed tutor.

* * *

The last incident of the film was revamped from an actual event of later years.

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Young Tom Edison returns to his family after his first day as a news butcher on the Grand Trunk Railroad.

OUTLINE AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Describe the presentation of title and credits. Quote the film's foreword. Point out pertinent reasons for its inclusion.
2. From your previously gained information of Edison's early life, list the screen playwright's purposes for beginning the story at the point of its opening.
3. How are the time, place, atmosphere, and mood established in the opening scenes?
4. Enumerate the leading characters and explain the methods of introducing each one by name and characteristics to the audience and into the story. Characterize the members of the Edison family.
5. Describe the Edison basement. Point out authentic details as gleaned from your research.
6. In the opening sequence, enumerate the amateur inventions by "Young Tom." Do any of these foreshadow later events?
7. Describe the episode involving Tannie's geography recitation. Trace Edison's knowledge of the Morse Code and his interest in telegraphy through the story. What subsequent events hinge upon the subject?
8. Is the fire in the school house authentic? What important situation in relation to Tom's education resulted from the episode?
9. Contrast the filmic and factual story in which young Edison saves the station-master's baby. Include the time, sequence of events, and the results. Why were these changes made?

10. Tell the true story of Tom's home-made telegraph system which is hinted in the screen play showing his connecting the cellar room with Tannie's by a wire. Which version is more interesting and dramatic? Why does the film omit it?
11. Describe the warm understanding between Mrs. Edison and Tom. Can you select interesting points from Edison's biographies to substantiate this relationship?
12. Trace the episode of the bottles marked "Poison" to an authentic incident as enumerated by Edison's biographers.
13. From the situation expositing Tom's sale of the candy and later becoming a "butcher" on the railway train, compare the factual and fictional versions. Is one more dramatic than the other? Why is this permissible?
14. Contrast the two versions of Edison's experimentation with animals and electricity.
15. Discuss Edison's near accident when the conductor pulls him into the moving baggage car. What life-long result hampered his genius? Do biographical authorities differ? Quote at least two differing opinions. Why was this version included in the screen play?
16. In light of your reading, discuss the unit picturing Edison's establishment of a printing press in the baggage car. What points included in the film were actual incidents?
17. Describe the episode concerning the bottle of nitroglycerine. Is this an au-

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY for *Young Tom Edison* found to be of greatest value to the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Research Department in seeking pertinent facts and background on the early life of Thomas A. Edison.

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thentic story? Why is it part of the motion picture. Discuss it as motivation for a later incident.

18. Tell the two stories of depicting Tom's loss of the position on the railroad. What disastrous result followed? Is this true to history? Point out subsequent references in the motion picture.

19. In young Edison's search for a new job, note the definite increase of sympathy for the character. Why is this necessary?

20. Describe Mrs. Edison's illness. Has it been motivated properly previously? Why does it reach a crisis as Tom leaves home?

21. Discuss the climax involving the mirror. What principles, later developed by Edison, are introduced during this sequence? Describe the resultant inventions.

22. Tell the story of Tom's saving the train. What previous motivation aids in the dramatic values? Does this episode seem to follow too quickly the previous situation of Mrs. Edison's illness?

23. What method is used to point the interest forward to the sequel, *Edison, the Man*?

CASTING CREDITS

Tom Edison.....	Mickey Rooney
Mrs. Samuel Edison.....	Fay Bainter
Samuel Edison.....	George Bancroft
Tannie Edison.....	Virginia Weiland
Mr. Nelson.....	Eugene Pallette
Mr. Dingle.....	Victor Kilian
Joe Dingle.....	Bobbie Jordan
Mr. McCarnay.....	J. M. Kerrigan
Dr. Pender.....	Lloyd Corrigan
Bill Edison.....	John Keating
Mr. Waddell.....	Clem Bevins
School Teacher.....	Eily Malyon
Captain Bracket.....	Harry Shannon

PRODUCING CREDITS

Directed by Norman Taurog.
Photographed by Sidney Wagner, A. S. C.
Produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The Technical Director's Page

by LESLIE ALLEN JONES

Lecturer, Extension Division, Brown University, Providence, R. I.

The Wind Machine

THE noise of the wind—what a memory to a back stage haunter like myself! Not of particular plays—what technical man can remember such an unimportant detail—but of particular scenes and mishaps in which the mechanical whoosher figured. Nowadays we have electrical wind, wind recorded on phonograph records and wind whistling with the aid of an electric motor through a horn—but give me the mechanical and with a man to crank it—for only such a wind may be operated as an instrument and worked on cue—down to a whisper and up to a roar on cue. And it is a lot more fun besides being much more flexible.

Now I have many questions in the course of a year—and the construction of a wind machine bobs up quite often. So now I warn every one of you—from now on you can expect to be referred to the March issue of the THESPIAN for 1940—and what could be more appropriate for March than the wind as a subject for conversation?

Look at my drawing for the page. Read from left to right, top to bottom—and you should almost know how to build such a contraption without reading these words. The earmuffs on my little figure in the right hand corner are my own invention—don't let the director catch you wearing them, for you are properly supposed to hear your cue—and a roar of wind in the wrong place pleases no one but the audience—and you can never be sure of them.

The wheel is the important part of a wind machine, and the edges of the battens are the making and breaking of your sound. The edges should be sharp and smooth, to scrape on the canvas with harsh finality. I knew one careful carpenter who made the mistake of running a plane down the edges of his battens—and not much of a wind did he get. The rougher scraping surface the better—unplaned lumber is fine. Once I saw a good machine the cross battens of which were splined shingle sticks—the roughly hewn sticks that tie up a bundle of shingles, the ends notched and tied with a string.

The hardest part of the wheel is the circles. I have seen them made of wooden heads, the tops of wooden butter tubs, tin garbage can covers, circles of cardboard. That will give you a rough

the better—since it is the rapid rasp of the lath or batten sticks against this canvas that gives you the noise. About six feet of twenty inch material is quite O. K. See your awning man—the kind of heavy duck used in coal bags is good. Strange to say, there is a certain type of lighter cloth that is quite good also—I'm thinking of the back of a rubberized raincoat—the kind that imitates a polo coat, which I once saw used successfully.

Eight battens—one-by-two, one-by-three, or lengths of lath or lattice stock—the latter being harder to fasten in place.

Nail the battens in place as shown. It is a good idea to have them all sunk in from the edge of your wheel a bit, so the canvas will not attempt to slide off the surface—so that the sides of your wheel form a little rim.

The axle—the best is made of iron pipe as shown, and if you use it, wrap the end of the handle with friction tape, shellac, and you have a more comfortable handle than the cold pipe. And don't forget comfort—for sometimes winds have been known to blow for an entire act. Another axle is made of broomstick as shown. That locking slot is necessary so you see to make the wheel turn with the axle. A notched slot does not weaken the axle as much as trying to nail through. One may notch the other side of the wheel axle also, though I have never found it necessary. The handle may be built as

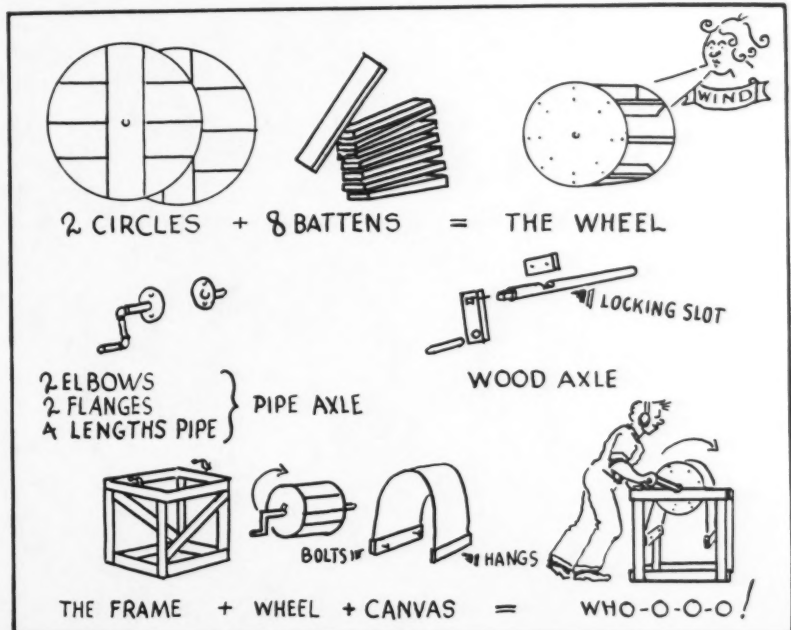
shown, or the slot-crank, as illustrated in my article for the October issue of 1939, may be used.

The frame. One may build any type frame so long as the wheel is well supported. I have seen small frames, designed to be placed on a bench or table, at the edge so that the flap of canvas might hang free. I have seen frames made of two single uprights with cross braces, something like a letter "T" inverted. But I have sketched in the lower left hand corner of my drawing the frame that I would build—it is strong, light, and provides a measure of protection for the wheel when not in active use.

Make a square frame by using corner blocks or keystone—the frame to be about thirty inches in height and nearly that in width. The width is determined by the diameter of the wheel, and there should be plenty of room to allow the canvas free hanging space. Make two square frames exactly alike and you will have the two sides of your frame. The width that these sides stand apart is determined by the length of your wheel—which was marked in the first place by the width of your canvas. Allow two or three inches on each side of your wheel and make sure you are allowing room for your axle to bear on the top side of the frame.

Six pieces will make the sides of your frame. Simply nail the top and bottom cross pieces and put the diagonal piece as shown in the drawing. Diagonal braces on the sides of your square frames are not, in my opinion necessary, but if you think the strength improved, put them in.

With a jackknife or chisel make a small hollow in the top of your bearing surface and put the wheel in place. Cut straps of tin to nail over the axle to hold it



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down. If the wheel squeaks, don't use oil, for oil will swell the wood—use a cake of soap—dampen and rub well into the bearing surface.

Hang the canvas as shown—bolt, nail, or tie with rope one end, and let the other hang free. Fellow stagehands—let her blow!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

...your sending, if possible, plans or specifications for making a wind machine in the form of a paddle wheel around which are wooden laths covered by canvas.—M. E. C., N. Y.

JUST let M. E. C. refer to the article discussed above—and once again let me urge you to file these articles away for future use—for all further queries regarding wind machines will be told to see the *THE SPIAN* for March.

...will you advise me how we can produce the sound of a car stopping and starting and the shifting of gears?—F. M. K., Ohio.

THERE are several recordings of automobile sounds which might fill your needs if played on a radio phonograph with a loud volume control.

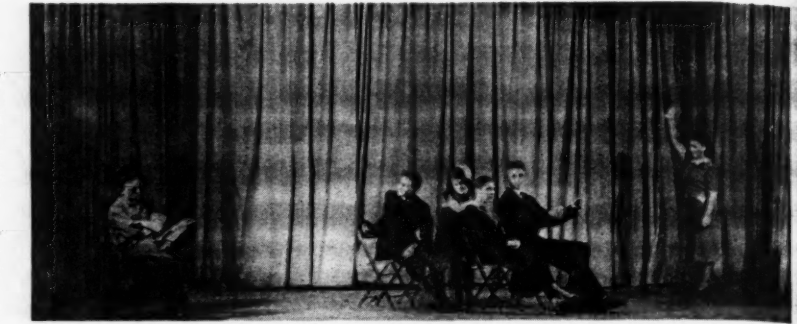
One trouble with a recording is that it is so mechanical, and runs for so long only. Personally I prefer a manually operated effect as it is much more flexible. Here are some stunts you might try.

Once we wanted the sound of an old car lumbering along the road—an easy bumbling of a noisy motor. In a desperate hurry, we produced a battered aluminum kettle, or pot, and a large egg beater. Placing the kettle right side up on the top of a kitchen table, the egg beater was placed inside and rotated slowly so that the sides of the beater bumped against the side of the kettle. It was a very good effect, except that the boy assigned to make the motor sound got so interested in manufacturing his noise that he failed to notice the vibration was moving the light pot over the table top—so suddenly the motor noise developed into a very thin crash.

Since then I have seen the motor effect worked with an egg beater placed on a bass drum head (no scraping of the side of the beater, just the hum of the vibration) against the side of an inverted tin wash boiler, and with an electric mixer with beater attachment against the wooden wall of a barn.

Perhaps it should operate something like this—all depends on the car of course—a sudden burr, breaking off, as the man cranks, another roar, settling to a hum, then a sudden pulling of the beater away from the side of the resonator, followed by a clank, another hum, another clank, then a hum that gradually dies away.

How to get that gear shift clank? Saw



Scene from the play, *THE HAPPY JOURNEY*, as given by members of Thespian Troupe No. 111 at Burley, Idaho, High School. This production was rated highest last season in the Southern Idaho State Declamation Festival. Directed by Thespian Sponsor E. J. Ryan.

it done once by dropping a piece of chain into another tin container.

...what are the rules and precautions to be followed in the use of guns on stage?—L. M. M., Indiana.

YOU are not particularly explicit in your query, L. M. M., but there are certain general theories as to the handling of guns and weapons on and off stage which may answer your problem. To begin—guns are generally used in pairs—hand guns, that is. One is used on stage by the actor involved, and one is held by the stage manager as a cover gun, to be fired in an instant if by chance the actor's weapon fails to discharge. A little care in planning the business around the shooting of a weapon generally enables the director to have only a dummy gun in the hands of the actor. He can turn and shoot and in the instant when his weapon is out of sight the cover gun can be fired. If he must shoot on stage, remember that sight lines are very deceiving, and the actor to be shot does not have to be in the line of fire. Have the shooting gentleman shoot upstage of his victim, and rehearse until you know he is to fire in the right direction. Always point the gun toward the floor—not straight down of course, but in a downward direction, so that the wad may hit the floor. Again, stage business can often be so arranged that the actor draws and fires in one motion, and firing while the weapon faces downward, keeps moving the gun so that the scene holds with the smoking weapon in a horizontal position. I have seen death struggles on the stage where two men come to grips and the shot is fired by the stage manager off stage, but in the turmoil on stage, no one doubted for a moment that one had shot the other.

Cannon shots are done very well with a bass drum if distant, with a shot gun fired into an empty steel barrel if near. A little water in the barrel will quench all wads.

One man should be responsible for all weapons during a show—generally the stage manager. Actors leaving the set should hand over their rifles, for instance, and receive them when entering a scene.

Inspect and inspect, and if possible, remove firing pins or hammers. And a starters gun makes a good prop. One other thing—never let a man fool with a cartridge trying to make a blank out of it. I saw a beautiful machine gun effect once—a row of small firecrackers in the bottom of a wash boiler. A little more fuse, and it would have been a swell riveting machine.

...want a drape cyclorama which would have the customary two door and a French window. It is necessary that we do things as cheaply as possible.—L. M., Nebraska.

I PRESUME that you mean a set of drapes with tabs, those shorter pieces that hang over the top of openings. It is standard practice to allow fifty per cent fullness in drapes. That is, should your back wall measure thirty feet, you would add fifteen, and have a drape forty-five feet in width. Now let us see, you want to have the "customary two door and a French window" openings. A single door is generally figured thirty inches wide, let us be generous and make it three feet—with the fullness that is six feet for the tabs. Stage doors are, by custom, six feet six inches high, so your tabs or headers will be, supposing your drapes to be fifteen feet high, eight feet six inches deep. French doors are usually four feet in width, but in the wider span of your back wall, make this opening six feet, with your tab of eight feet six inches in depth, twelve feet wide.

Consult the mail order catalogue unless you can get a good buy from your local dealer in cloth. Flannel is by far the cheapest, but repp gives a better set of drapes. I wouldn't pleat and hem, but make each curtain full width, planning to drape it when tying to your hanging battens. And such economies as dispensing with the chain which should be in the pocket at the bottom, placing your grommets eighteen inches apart instead of the usual foot, can be followed. Just webbing is best for the head of your drapes, but a folded strip of cotton sheeting can be used. A little care about shining lights in back of your drapes, and you won't miss the lining.

With the Radio Editor

This page is published for teachers and students interested in radio activities at the high school level. Readers' comments and suggestions are welcomed.

Edited by G. HARRY WRIGHT

Drama Department, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

AS a general thing, we teachers discourage, or at least do not encourage, the student of high school age who thinks he wants a radio career. The high degree of very special talent required, and the uncertainty of employment make it a field not to be entered into lightly. Perhaps we are wrong at times in this attitude, for after all, somebody must furnish the radio programs of the future, and if a student's talent is such that he can serve humanity best as a radio performer, then that's what he ought to be. He ought, however, to know before he decides to try it, what the odds are against him, how to proceed, and what he may expect in the way of reward.

First of all, nobody should try to crash radio until he is ready for it. That means maturity and background, and few high school students have enough of either. Consider the announcer. He must be able to pronounce without stumbling foreign names of persons and places figuring in the news; he must discuss glibly the musical compositions that are being broadcast, together with their composers; and he must have qualities of persuasiveness and leadership in his voice which will cause people to buy the product he advertises.

And the radio actor. He must be able to create a character and put on what amounts to a finished production at once—not after weeks of rehearsal, but the very first time he reads over the script.

All this calls for background and training, and for the boy or girl of Thespian age, that means more schooling—high school and college. So the very first practical thing to do to get in radio is to finish high school and get a liberal education in college.

The second thing to do to get in radio is to concentrate on courses and activities in school which will make you a good public performer—debate, acting, interpretation. And we must not forget English and Journalism, for here the student may develop the terse, smooth, fluid style so necessary in radio.

The third thing to do is to make contact with a local radio station—the smaller the better, because in small stations it is easy to study the fundamentals. Observe, ask questions. But here we must insert a warning. The high school student is not ready to tackle radio seriously, so his activity at the local station must be limited to spare time recreation which will not interfere with his work at school. He has a background to build up, and if he doesn't intend to that, his early activity at the broadcasting station may do him more

harm than good—may, in fact, make a successful career in radio impossible.

After the radio aspirant has completed his schooling, the small radio station is his first goal. Here, if he can get on the staff, he will quickly get intensive training in every phase of before-mike performance. This training, plus study, industry, and alertness, may some day lead the talented performer to the networks and big-time assignments.

NOW assuming that a person has talent, and follows faithfully all the steps in preparation for a radio career, what are his chances? Will he get a job, and how much will he make?

Neither question can be answered exactly, but even an approximate answer is not too encouraging. There are only slightly over 700 radio stations in the United States and all of them are manned and boast waiting lists. Competition is keen in smaller stations, and the larger stations and networks are practically closed to newcomers. So the opportunities for jobs are not as plentiful as they are in other fields.

Pay in the performance end of radio varies from nothing at all to splendid salaries of the headliners, equal to those of

top-flight stage or screen performers. Few, however, earn the high salaries, and the general average is low. Until recently many so-called "student announcers" on the staffs of small stations worked for nothing or for unbelievably small amounts, just to get started and to gain experience. This is curbed somewhat by law now, however. Salaries of announcers, actors, and musicians in local stations start as low as \$15 per week, and do not exceed \$75, even after years of service. For his \$15, too, the announcer may double as actor, writer, salesman, musician, or even engineer. On the networks salaries are higher, but even here staff positions do not often pay the fabulous figures we sometimes hear about. True, the celebrity may receive \$1,500, or even \$5,000 for a single broadcast, but that celebrity is one in many thousands, and in practically every case he has won his earning power in some other medium such as screen or stage, before coming to radio.

If you are thinking of writing for radio, rather than performing before the microphone, here are some enlightening figures. According to Erik Barnouw's excellent book, *Handbook of Radio Writing* (Little, Brown & Co. Boston, 1939), a local station staff writer, turning out continuities, commercials, talks, announcements, and all other types of material to be read over the air, earns \$15 to \$75 per week. If the writer is really good—and fortunate—and manages to get on a network staff, he may earn \$40 to \$150 per week, but this of course cannot be expected for many years. If he lands a position on the staff of an advertising agency, the radio writer may earn \$25 to \$250 per week. It goes without saying that most of the actual salaries are nearer the lower figure than the higher one.

So, in summary: Radio work takes a special talent which few of us have; it calls for an extensive liberal education together with experience in public performance as background; it can be approached best through humble beginnings in the small station; to the many it offers only meager financial return; but to the one-in-a-hundred-thousand who has the peculiar genius for it, it offers handsome rewards. Be very sure of yourself before you try it.

Notes on Technique

ANYONE can simulate the cry of a baby fairly well before the microphone by stuffing his handkerchief all the way in his mouth before he starts to wail, and by remembering that the average infant doesn't cry rhythmically, but usually makes almost as much noise on the intake of the breath as on the outgo.

Sound effects are tricky on the air—even when they're good. For instance, a waterfall, an approaching cloudburst flood, and a subway train roaring through the night may all sound pretty much alike. The script writer can help the sound effects man, and incidentally make

Handbook of Radio Writing

By Erik Barnouw, (Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1939) is one of the most recent and certainly one of the best books out on radio writing. It has some of the qualities of a good novel, in that the style is alive, movement-suggesting and readable. Once you open the book, you will have difficulty closing it until you have read every word.

First, the author surveys the market, and acquaints us with the avenues through which scripts may reach potential buyers. Then he describes radio as a medium for carrying the work of the writer, noting its peculiarities and the special techniques it brings into existence. Next follow instructions in the use of the three tools, sound effects, music, and speech; explanations of routine techniques and trick devices. Under "Market Musts" Mr. Barnouw analyzes the various types of programs, and instructs us in the techniques of each. Finally, the book contains two splendid Appendices. The first is a complete radio adaptation of *Macbeth* with explanatory notes opposite each page of script (this adaptation may be broadcast royalty-free by any school group); the second is "The Writer's Guide to Radio," a combined glossary, guide, and index, which contains just about all the information one could want on radio, its personalities, organizations, its terms, and its programs.

The peculiar thing about this book is, that while it is meant to be, and is, a book on writing, I found it at the same time an excellent manual on production. Every radio director should put it on his "must" list.

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Radio Appreciation

New "Cavalcade of America" Series Now Heard Over NBC Stations

STUDIO GLOSSARY

Have you heard announcers and engineers in your local radio station use such terms as "dead spot", "on the nose", "platter", "blurb", "light and shade", "boot", "across the board", "Schmalz it", and many others, and wondered what they meant? And have you seen these same gentlemen engage in mysterious sign language with the hands and head, so that they seemed to be deaf mutes, and you could not figure out what it was all about?

You can learn "studio lingo" and studio sign language, and it will be very useful in your own workshop, as well as being lots of fun. John S. Carlile, in his book, *Production and Direction of Radio Programs*, has a whole chapter devoted to studio sign language, and it is profusely illustrated, a picture for every sign. He also has in the back of the book an extensive glossary of studio terms.

The United States Office of Education in the Department of the Interior, Washington, puts out a Radio Glossary which you may have simply for the asking. But the real way to get this information is to visit a radio station while it is on the air and observe for yourself. The staff will be glad to explain everything. Only take this warning: each station to a certain extent makes up its own signs and language. A word or action may mean one thing in one station, and something else in another.

the play clearer, by putting words in the dialogue which will identify the sound effect at once.

It's a good idea to have a low box in the studio, covered with old carpet. Then when a six-foot-two boy plays a scene with a little girl just under five feet, they both have a chance at proper placement but I feel that there should be separate competitive auditions for each radio program, unless it is one of a series involving the same character. A general audition early in the year for membership in the Workshop is good, but there should be separate tryouts for each play. This insures fairness and variety, and is the only way to get just the right voice for each part.

The first rehearsal of a radio play should not be before the microphone, but should be conducted on a stage, with perfect freedom of movement. This encourages naturalness, and gives the actors the feel of the play before they face the artificiality of the microphone.

DO YOU need scripts for use in your high school Radio Workshop? Well, the biggest thrill comes in writing them yourself, and it can be done by high school students with great success. Not, however, without some study of technique. There are many good books on the market telling how it is done. One of the most interesting of the recent ones is *How To Write For Radio*, by James Whipple (McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1938). Others will be listed on this page from time to time.

A BRAND-NEW series of "Cavalcade of America" programs is being broadcast over a nation-wide hook-up of nearly 100 stations of the National Broadcasting Company's Blue and Red Networks on Tuesdays, from 9:00 to 9:30 p. m., E.S.T.

This new series, continuing under the sponsorship of the E. I. Dupont de Nemours Company, is being presented under the personal supervision of Dr. Frank Monaghan, a Professor of History at Yale University and Fellow of Calhoun College. Dr. Monaghan, who is widely known as a lecturer, author of numerous important historical works and a former Assistant Editor of the "Dictionary of American Biography," has as his assistants and consultants two equally noted historians: Marquis James, twice winner of the Pulitzer prize for biography, author of *A Biography of Sam Houston*, *Andrew Jackson*, *They Had Their Hour*, etc.; and Carl Carmer, whose best-sellers include *Stars Fell on Alabama*, *Listen for a Lonesome Drum*, *The Hudson* and other river books.

The new edition of "Cavalcade of America" opened on January 2 with a dramatization based upon the adventures of Amerigo Vespucci and the historical controversy that has raged ever since his name became attached to this continent. Subsequent weekly chapters are bringing to life the history of this country through vibrant and authentic dramatizations of the lives of men who molded this nation and made it the outstanding country of the world. Advance synopses of the "Cav-

"Cavalcade Series" Has Best Radio Actors

The best radio actors in the country play the roles of America's great and near-great on The Cavalcade of America. Their names are not famous. The good character actors before the microphone seek to remain anonymous so that their characterizations may not be spoiled in the listener's mind. Nevertheless, the legitimate stage, the Shakespearean drama, the motion pictures and the old Chautauqua circuits supply to Cavalcade's casting director dozens of the best actors for every part.

They have to be good, because Cavalcade is known among radio actors and actresses as a hard show. When acting in an original skit or a comedy playlet, the actor is allowed free rein in his interpretation of the role he plays. In Cavalcade he must play George Washington, Daniel Boone, Abraham Lincoln or Benedict Arnold, and must combine his own ideas of the part with the facts as determined by research.

A radio actor who attains a part in a Cavalcade program is conceded in show business to have won his spurs. It is one of the most exacting shows on the air, with hours of toil required to make just one smooth, realistic, authentic half-hour on the air.

To help students and teachers develop a greater appreciation of the better radio programs is the purpose of this column. We should like to have our readers suggest the radio programs for discussion in future issues.—Editor.

alcade" dramas are available to teachers by addressing requests to this program care of the local station.

Scheduled for early presentation in the Cavalcade series are a number of stories from American history that contain out-of-the-ordinary facts never before known by the average American citizen. Professor Monaghan is quoted as saying that the titles of the shows are incapable of indicating the unusual quality of the stories to be dramatized. Following is a partial list of subjects presented on recent broadcasts or now in the course of preparation:

Thomas Jones—Pilgrims' Pirate: A real "side story" of a risky adventure that could have succeeded but did, in spite of bad planning.

Father Jogues—The Man in the Black Robe: A brave Jesuit who won the hearts of his enemies, and showed the world that a man of God knows how to die.

Thomas Jefferson—He Knew What They Wanted: The father of American democratic principles emerges in a new light.

Benedict Arnold—A Continental Uniform: Was Arnold a traitor—or does he deserve a better name?

The Cruise of the "Experiment" — When an early American riverboat captain gets the war derelict and sails out to sea, the things that happen will astound you.

The People vs. Ann Royal—A story about one of the most interesting women of nineteenth-century America, whose name few people know.

Since its inception in the Fall of 1933, "Cavalcade" has been a consistent winner of radio awards. In 1938 and again in 1939 it won citations from the Women's National Radio Committee as an outstanding educational program both for children and adults. In 1939 the Women's Press Club of New York praised it as an adult educational service. In 1937 the American Legion Women's Auxiliary designated it as a program "most acceptable and worthwhile to the general family."

In commenting upon this new series, James Rowland Angell, NBC Educational Counselor says:

"To students in schools and colleges and to all thoughtful persons who would like the meaning of our troubled times, 'Cavalcade' offers complete authentic and illuminating material of absorbing interest. I anticipate that it will open a new chapter in the evolution of commercial radio by showing how fine entertainment may be combined with the enlargement of knowledge and the enrichment of understanding."

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ON THE HIGH SCHOOL STAGE

The purpose of this department is the presentation of interesting and important events as they occur in the field of high school dramatics. Dramatics directors are urged to contribute brief articles concerning their major activities from month to month.

Brownsville, Pa.

Thespians of Troupe No. 187 at Brownsville, Pa. Senior High School, opened their 1939-40 dramatic season on October 17 with the presentation of the Sixth Annual One-Act Play program which included, *Miss Mobray's Big Moment*, *Light*, and *There's a Crowd*. On November 12 the school broadcast of the first play, *It Sometimes Happens*, was given over station WMBS of Uniontown. The first long play of the season, *Skidding*, was given by the Junior Class on November 30. Among the major activities of the present semester is the production of the operetta, *Pirates of Penzance*, to be given on March 5 with the cooperation of the Music Department, and the Annual Monongahela Valley High School Play Festival which is scheduled for March 9 and which will be held at California, Pa. The festival is sponsored jointly by members of Thespian Troupe No. 187 and the Drama Department of California State Teachers College. Miss Jean E. Donahey is in charge of dramatics and sponsors the Troupe.

Ashland, Ohio

An attractive booklet designed in the shape of a Thespian insignia and containing a complete program of activities for the 1939-40 season was issued early in the fall by members of Thespian Troupe No. 29 at Ashland High School, with Mr. Harry Dotson, Regional Director for Ohio, as Sponsor. The first meeting of the Troupe was held on September 12. Topics included for discussion and demonstration on the program at the bi-weekly meetings were puppets, make-up, theatres, technical problems of play production, and review of the current Broadway plays.

West Union, Iowa

Dramatic activities so far this season at West Union High School (Troupe No. 183) include the production of the one-acts, *The Maker of Dreams*, *Swamp Spirit*, and *The Purple Door*. The play, *You Can't Take It With You*, and a series of skits for the school assembly programs. Special projects include the study of make-up and a Northwestern Iowa Thespian Conference of which Miss Lananda Carr, Troupe Sponsor, will be in charge.—Barbara J. Wright, Secretary.

Pasco, Wash.

Three one-act plays, *Grandma Tells the String*, *Why the Chimes Rang*, and *The Monkey's Paw*, were performed during the first semester as part of the school assembly programs at Pasco High School (Thespian Troupe No. 271), with Miss Elizabeth Hewett as Sponsor. The first long play of the year, *Green*, was produced on November 29, 30.—Dorothy Wirth, Secretary.

Apple Creek, Colo.

Activities for the first semester at Apple Creek High School (Thespian Troupe No. 381) included the production of *Daddy Long Legs* on November 23, 24, the performance of

the play, *The Idlings of the King*, as a student body program on December 15, and the presentation of a Christmas play before the Women's Club on December 16. The schedule for the present semester includes the production of the comedy, *Nothing But the Truth*, on April 12. Thespian Troupe No. 381 was installed at this school late in October at a special ceremony and formal dinner. Miss Clara G. Hogg is the Sponsor.

Carlisle, Pa.

The Charm School was given on December 1 as the first major play of the present season at Carlisle High School (Thespian Troupe No. 214), with Miss Charlotte B. Chadwick directing. The one-act, *Herbie and the Mumps*, was given during the first semester on one of the auditorium programs. Much interest was aroused by the production of the play, *Backfire*, late in January. The annual school operetta will be given this spring.—Eleanor Derr, Secretary.

Birmingham, Ala.

A number of one-act plays are being produced this season by members of the dramatic club (Thespian Troupe No. 375) at Erskine Ramsay Technical High School, with Miss Evelyn Walker directing all dramatic activities. Among the plays given so far are *And Now There's Buford*, *Objection Overruled*, *The Caravan*, *Carmen*, *Another Beginning*, and *There's Always Tomorrow*. Students are also devoting much time to the study of various articles published in THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN as part of their work on play criticism. Other activities include radio programs and book reviews.—Elizabeth Kirk, Secretary.

Geneva, Ohio

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 368 are meeting bi-weekly this season at Geneva High School under the sponsorship of Miss Dorothy V. Diles. Meetings are being devoted to busi-

ness matters and to the study and presentation of various dramatic programs. Thespians have charge of scenery, properties, sound effects, advertising make-up, and tickets for each of the school's major productions. The production schedule for this year includes three long plays, a number of one-act plays to be given this semester, and participation in the National Thespian Drama Festival and the Ohio Speech League Contest. The first full-length play, *Apron String Revolt*, was given on December 1, beginners playing all roles under Thespian assistance.—Doris Konczal, Secretary.

Kilgore, Texas

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 45 at Kilgore Senior High School gave *The Eyes of Tlaloc* as their first major play of this season, with Miss Rebecca Thayer directing. Other activities of the first semester included the presentation of the one-act, *Be Home By Midnight*, on one of the assembly programs, and the production of *Mimi Lights the Candle* for the Christmas assembly program. Thespians are also sponsoring an evening of one-act plays and the senior class play this spring. The Troupe will also enter the Interscholastic League One-Act Play Contest.—Los Laird, Secretary.

Ritzville, Wash.

Three long plays are included in this year's season at Ritzville High School (Thespian Troupe No. 4) with Miss Jeanette Kiefer directing. The first, *Parents and Pigtales*, with Thespians playing the principal roles, was given on October 28. The Senior Class play, scheduled for production in February, and the Junior Class Play to be given in March, had not been chosen at the time of this writing. Thespians plan to entertain one of the neighboring Troupes this spring. Some one-act plays are also scheduled for production this spring.—Marguerite Eckhardt, Secretary.

Logan, W. Va.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 168 at Logan Senior High School are devoting much time this year to the study of biographies of some of the famous actors and actresses from Shakespeare's time to the present. Thespians are also assisting with all the class plays as stage managers, and as chairmen of various production committees. The first full-length plays of the year, *Three Days of Grace*, was staged on December 8. Two other long plays are scheduled for production this spring. A special event this spring will be the local Drama Festival which will include one-acts given by two nearby Thespian Troupes and of which members of Troupe No. 168, with Miss Olive Greenawalt as sponsor, will act as host. This local festival is one of several to be held throughout the state under the sponsorship of The National Thespian Society, with representative schools from each participating in the State Festival at West Virginia University on April 5, 6.—Mary Ellen Marushi, Secretary.

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Moscow, Idaho

Life Begins at Sixteen, *Wings of the Morning*, and *Hansel and Gretel* were given as part of the dramatic program sponsored during the first semester at Moscow High School under the direction of Miss Elizabeth Stickney, Sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 56 at this school. The first semester activities also included the production of some original plays for the Kiwanis Club and a broadcast over station KFPY.

Weston, W. Va.

Jane Eyre was given on January 15 as the first long play of the present season by members of Thespian



Scene from the mystery play, *THE EYES OF TLALOC*, as staged by the Senior Class at Lemmon, S. Dak., High School (Thespian Troupe No. 83). Directed by Miss Helen Movius.

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Troupe No. 99 at Weston High School, with Miss Urilla M. Bland directing. The first semester activities also included the All-School Carnival on December 18 and the production of the one-act play, *His First Girl*. Meetings, which are held regularly, are being devoted to a study of modern playwrights and their works, and advanced principles of acting. A special event of the spring semester at this school will be the Local Drama Festival in which The-

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★ A SMASH HIT ★ NIGHT OF JANUARY SIXTEENTH

"We have produced a number of very fine Broadway successes in recent years, but never have we had a play which created so much interest . . . I most enthusiastically recommend it to any senior high school group for it has all the requirements of a good high school play."—Miss Leah H. Wildhagen, *Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin*.

"One of the best plays I have ever used and particularly liked by the high school students . . . A great success."—Mr. Robert Beard, *Morrisville, Vt.*

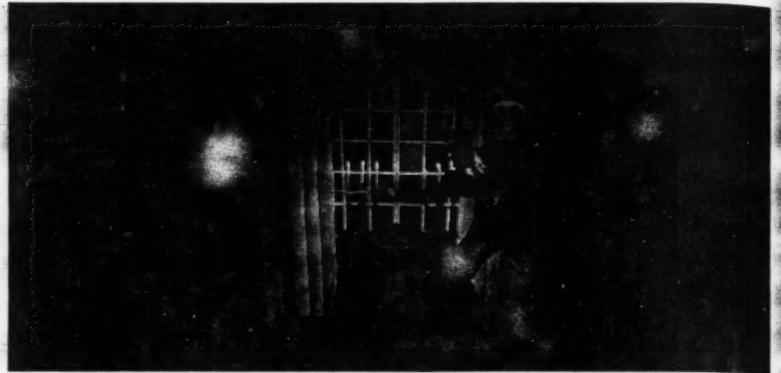
"A success in every way. It has caused more interest than anything that has ever been done in the line of dramatics at this school."—Mr. Henry C. Hitt, *Christopher, Ill.*

"The success was beyond our wildest dreams."—Mrs. J. Harrison Colhoun, *Community Centre, Owensville, Md.*

NIGHT OF JANUARY SIXTEENTH
Is in three acts, one setting, a court room, and requires a cast of eleven men, ten women, and extras. Player's Books cost 75c each; Director's Manuscript lent free to producers.

Play Department
LONGMANS, GREEN & COMPANY
55 Fifth Ave. New York

Mention *The High School Thespian*



The stylized Louis XV. and Empire backgrounds for this modern version of *A SCRAP OF PAPER* gave the play a formal and artificial flavor. Given by the dramatics department of the Lincoln High School, Seattle, Wash. Directed by John R. Kerr. Technical Director, Herbert Philippi.

pians from the high schools at Spencer and Clendenin will participate. Troupe No. 99 will act as host for the festival and Miss Bland will act as Festival Chairman.

Atwood, Ill.

Greater interest in dramatics was created during the fall semester at Atwood Township High School with the formal installation of Thespian Troupe No. 380 on November 9. Ten students formed the charter roll, with Miss Barbara Brice as sponsor. Plays for the semester included *His Ozark Cousin*, staged on November 17, and a Cotton Cuties Ladies' Minstrel which included the production of the play, *Sweet Sixteen*. Much interest is being shown in the activities of the school verse choir.

Grafton, W. Va.

With Miss Ruth Batten directing, *The Goose Hangs High*, was given on December 1 as the first long play of the present season at Grafton High School (Thespian Troupe No. 171). Thespians are active with the preparation of various one-act plays for the school contest this spring. Some time is being given also to the discussion of professional and radio plays.—Mary Ellen Sinclair, *Secretary*.

Ashland, Ohio

Mr. Harry Dotson, sponsor for Troupe No. 29 at Ashland High School, reports that his Thespians opened the second active year with the sponsorship of the annual carnival. Their second attempt was the production of the play, *The Tower Room Mystery*. Thespians are also assisting in various other programs in the school and community, and are attending some of the plays given by the Playhouse in Cleveland, Ohio.

Stillwater, Minn.

Under the direction of Mrs. Ethel Armstrong Gower, a number of new members have been added this year to Troupe No. 93 at Stillwater High School. The club sponsored the production of *Macbeth* given by the Bruce-Hendrickson Co. early in the fall. Exchange programs with six nearby schools were also a part of the activities of the fall semester. Mrs. Gower writes that she has a very enthusiastic group of Thespians this year.

Bloomsburg, Pa.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 158 are devoting much time this semester to monologues and reading plays, as well as helping with the major plays. The season began with the full-length play, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, in November. Mrs. Harriet H. Kline has charge of dramatics and Thespian activities.—Joan Magee, *Secretary*.

East Millinocket, Me.

The annual inter-class one-act play contest this season at Garret Schenck, Jr., High School (George Arliss Troupe No. 273) was held on October 24 with four plays being presented. First place honors went to the Tenth Grade play, *It's An Ill Wind*, with Raymond Paoletti and Mona Brewer as best actor and best actress respectively. Students of the Eleventh Grade gave *The Eligible Mr. Bangs*, while the Seniors gave *A Flower of Yaddo*. While the judges were conferring, Thespians gave the one-act, *The Winner*. Mr. Daniel Turner, Troupe Sponsor, is President of the Maine Speech Association of which he is the founder and is in charge of the State One-Act Play Contest this spring.

Urbana, Ill.

A "dramatic night" consisting of the following one-act play, *Tit-for-Tat*, *Fireman Sam*, *My Child*, *Madness in Triple Time*, and *Just What They Wanted*, was given on October 12 as the first important event of the 1939-40 season at Urbana High School (Thespian Troupe No. 161). The Dramatics Department with Mrs. Ethel Hamilton in charge, also furnished several one-act plays for community organizations. Full-length productions for the first semester included *The Christmas Carol* in December, and Channing Pollock's *The Fool in January*. Thespian Troupe No. 161 was completely reorganized early this season under Mrs. Hamilton's direction.

Red Wing, Minn.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 213, with Mr. C. E. Davies as sponsor from an inner circle for the Players Club at Central High School. *Seven Sisters* was given during the fall semester as the first long play of the season. Other activities included the production of *God Save the King* and *The Boy on the Meadow* for special assembly programs, a series of radio broadcasts, and the production of operetta *H. M. S. Pinafore*.

Tomah, Wis.

In guiding and directing the regular dramatics club at Tomah High School, members of Thespian Troupe No. 274 act as a group of Directors, assuming all responsibilities in directing all club activities. Miss Dorothy Sacher is sponsor. Zona Gale's *The Night of January Sixteenth* has been chosen as the entry for the Dramatics Contest this year.

Emmett, Idaho

Two long plays, *Little Women*, given on October 13, and Barry's *The Youngest*, on December 8, were presented at Emmett High School (Thespian Troupe No. 52).

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Denver, Colorado

first semester, with Miss Margaret Echter directing. The popular *Why the Chimes* was given at a special Christmas program December 22. Thespians will devote their efforts to a study of one-act plays this semester. Other projects for the year include the study of make-up and the study of Shakespearean plays, and acting.—*Evelyn Walker, Secretary.*

Greenwich, Conn.

Three performances (October 19, 20, 21) of *Can't Take It With You* were given at Greenwich High School (Thespian Troupe No. 243) during the first semester, with Miss George Vest directing. The operetta, *H. M. S. Pique*, was given on December 6, 7, 8, and the one-act, *Dust of the Road*, was presented at the Christmas Assembly program. Miss Vest reports that her spring play—possibly a Shakespearean play—is scheduled for production on March 14, 15, 16. Greenwich High School will be host to the New England Drama Day Festival on April 26, 27.

Stanton, Idaho

A complete reorganization of Thespian Troupe No. 39 at Preston High School has been effected during the past two seasons under sponsorship of Miss Agnes Howe. The first play of the first semester was *It Never Rains in Spain* given on December 15.—*Eva Joy Wall, Secretary.*

Stewan, W. Va.

The major dramatic event of the fall semester at Magnolia High School (Thespian Troupe No. 189) was the production of *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* given early in December under the direction of Mrs. Kathryn M. Talbert. The dramatics department also prepared programs which were given before the student body and community organizations. Members of Troupe No. 189 will participate in the Local Drama Festival which will be held at War, West Virginia, early this spring. During her production of *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, Mrs. Talbert says: "We had the largest audience we have had in years. The leading play presented in a section which witnessed the famous McCoy-Hatfield feud really did attract attention."

Gettysburg, Pa.

When String Revolt was given on October 13 as the first long play of the fall semester at Gettysburg High School (Thespian Troupe No. 132), with Miss Ruth A. McIlhenny directing. *That Girl Patsy* was given by the Class early in December as the second play of the year. Eleven new members were added to the Troupe as a result of work done in these productions.—*Robert McIlhenny, Secretary.*

Champaign, Ill.

The first initiation of the present season was held November 15 at Champaign High

School (Troupe No. 106). Four new members were admitted at a special ceremony which was followed with a dinner. Each of the new members presented a five-minute reading as part of the evening's program. The musical comedy, *Go West Young Man*, was presented on December 8, 9. Miss Marion Stuart directs dramatics and Thespian activities.—*Andrey Gerrish, Secretary.*

Switchback, W. Va.

So We'll Just Pretend was staged under the direction of Miss Gertrude E. Skaggs as the first major play of the present season at Elkhorn High School (Thespian Troupe No. 206). The play was presented on November 30.

Sac City, Iowa

Performances were given on November 17, 18, of the play, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, at Sac City High School under the joint sponsorship

of the Music and Speech Departments. A large number of students appeared in the production which was directed by Burdette Moeller, Anaruth Warberg, and Roy L. Holtz. Mr. Moeller is sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 12 at this school.

Florence, Colo.

Four one-act plays, *The House of Greed*, *Those in Glass Houses*, *The Mummy Steps Out*, and *The Silver Lining*, were presented in a play contest held on December 20, 21, at Florence High School. The contest was held under the supervision of Mr. Richard Phillips, new sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 28 at this school. The first full-length play of the season, *Auntie Up*, was given on December 15. Thespians are devoting much time this year to the study of make-up, play directing, and stagecraft.—*Doris Jean Smith, Secretary.*

Robbinsdale, Minn.

Thespians at Robbinsdale Senior High School (Troupe No. 352) are devoting their bi-monthly meetings this season to the study of various phases of acting and are presenting a number of one-act as part of their year's activities. Among the one-act presented are *Yes Means No*, *Spring Song*, *The Gypsy*, *Western Night*, *Frontier Life*, and *Romance, Inc.* The first long play of the year, *The Adorable Spendthrift*, was produced by the Junior Class late in October. The musical activities for the season include the operetta, *Hansel and Gretel*, staged late in November, a Christmas concert, and the high school operetta which will be given in April. Miss Bess Sinnott directs all dramatics activities.

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Special projects in dramatics this season at Coeur d'Alene High School (Troupe No. 190) include a Speech Festival, Choral reading, dance poetry, and the Island Empire One-Act Play Festival. Plays given during the first semester this year included Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, and a G. G. A. Revue, *Salute to Liberty*, in which all girl Thespians in school participated. Miss Doris E. Marsolais directs dramatics and was appointed this year Thespian Regional Director for Idaho.—*Ada Belle Pedersen, Secretary.*

Oceanside, N. Y.

Fred Jackson's farce in three acts, *A Full House*, was produced on November 17 by the Seniors of Oceanside High School (Thespian Troupe No. 132), with Miss Frances Weaver directing the production. Miss Weaver is the author of a series of articles appearing this spring in the *High School Thespian*. Troupe No. 132 was installed on December 20 before an audience of over five hundred parents, teachers, and students. The pledge was given by Jean Meier of Troupe No. 120 of Rockville Center, N. Y.—*Alice Duker, Secretary.*

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Fort Benton, Mont.

Planned in order to give every member of the Speech Class a chance to appear on the stage, a special program entitled "An Evening of Fun" was presented on October 19 at Fort Benton High School (Thespian Troupe No. 195), with Miss Ila Grace Hagie, troupe sponsor, directing all plays and readings presented on the program. One-acts presented were *Not For Ladies*, *At the Theatre*, and *A Bargain's a Bargain*.

Superior, Neb.

The three-act comedy, *Mama's Baby Boy*, was given on November 21 by the Junior Class at Superior High School (Thespian Troupe No. 337). Mr. Harold Ahrendts directs Speech and Dramatics and recently reestablished Thespian activities at this school.

Wyoming, Ill.

National Thespians of Troupe No. 324 of the Wyoming Community High School were quite active in dramatics the first semester of this school year. The dramatic season opened with the production of the three-act comedy, *Here Comes Charlie*. Much advertising and a clever parade netted a huge audience at this play. On December 17, both Glee Club, Band and Dramatic Departments combined talents for the presentation of a beautiful Christmas pageant, *The Birthday of a King*. There were one-hundred twenty students in the pageant. Both Glee Club and Band members were garbed in lovely red and white robes. The stage settings, costumes and lighting made the pageant very effective. Also, in December, the National Thespians held formal initiation candlelight services for seven new candidates. Thespians staged the one-act contest play, *The Strange Road*, for National Drama Week. Thespians also presented the one-act play, *Afterwards*, as a part of the program.—Francis Irwin, Secretary.

Concord, N. C.

The spring semester of last year included one full-length play and three one-act plays at Concord High School (Thespian Troupe 202). The club as a whole presented *The Charm School*, while the Seniors gave three one-act plays in May. In September of 1939 the club was organized with about one hundred and eighty members. This year's program includes one large production, *Big Hearted Herbert*, and three one-act plays. At a recent Troupe meeting Miss Lililan Quinn, sponsor, invited nine members to join the National Thespians. All the students of Concord High are very proud of our club, as it is the most active in school.—Jennie Harris, Secretary.

Butte, Mont.

One of the most successful productions in recent years was that of the play, *Night of January 16th*, staged on February 25 of last season by members of Thespian Troupe No. 176 at Butte High School, with Miss Helen McGregor in charge of the production. A number of students appeared in the production.

Alliance, Ohio

The present season is proving a busy one for members of Thespian Troupe No. 231 at Alliance High School, with Miss Elizabeth Carson in charge of dramatics. The Senior Class play, *Growing Pains*, was produced on December 13. Special projects on this year's schedule include the production of an operetta this spring, a chapel play also planned for this spring, and participation in the annual National Thespian Drama Festival which will be held at Kent State University on April 11, 12, 13. One-acts given during the fall semester included *Three's A Crowd*, and *No Christmas for Horace*. Thespians are devoting their meetings to the study of scenery, lighting, and make-up. Miss Carson returned to Alliance last fall after being away on a leave of absence.—John Flood, Secretary.

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East Haven, Conn.

Over six hundred patrons and patronesses were listed on the blue and gold program for the production of the comedy, *A Lucky Break*, staged jointly by the Class of 1940 and members of Thespian Troupe No. 63 at East Haven High School on November 23, 24. Miss Louise Scott, Troupe Sponsor, had charge of the production. A large number of students made up the cast and the production staff.

Harrisburg, Ill.

Among the one-acts presented on the assembly programs this year at Harrisburg Township High School (Thespian Troupe No. 16) are *The Whirlwind*, *Sause for the Gossings*, *A Marriage Proposal*, and *Play in Miniature*. The first long play of the season, *You Can't Take It With You*, was staged by the Senior Class on December 1. Plans for this season call for the appearance of every member of the dramatics club in at least one one-act play. Mrs. Lolo F. Eddy directs dramatics and Thespian activities.—*Marjorie Heine, Secretary.*

New London, Wis.

Members of Troupe No. 119 at Washington High School, with Miss Mary Larsen as sponsor, began their year's activities by planning early in the fall an inter-class play contest, with Thespians in the role of directors for the various entries. During the fall semester Thespians were also responsible for a float—scene from *Romeo and Juliet*—used in the Homecoming Parade. Troupe meetings are being held regularly, each being devoted to some phase of dramatic work.—*Kathleen Smith, Reporter.*

Mount Vernon, N. Y.

Seven to One and *There's None of the Perfect* are two of the plays given at Chapman High School (Thespian Troupe No. 114) under the direction of Mrs. Laura W. MacDonald. The major dramatic event of the fall semester was the production of *Brother Rat* on December 15, 16. A make-up crew composed of Thespians does work for four to six groups during the year.—*Margaret MacDonald, Secretary.*

Salem, Ohio

Long plays included on this season's production schedule at Salem High School (Troupe No. 358) include the Senior Class play, *Off the Grass*, and the Junior Class play, *Call for the Grass*. The year's program calls for the production of at least one one-act play each month. Thespians plan to enter the annual National Thespian Drama Festival at Kent State University on April 11, 12. Miss Viola Bodo is the new director of dramatics and Troupe Sponsor, having assumed her position during the fall semester after the resignation of Mr. James McDonald, former sponsor.—*Lucia Sharp, Secretary.*

Burley, Idaho

The Class of 1940 at Burley High School (Thespian Troupe No. 111) chose for their class play, *Apron String Revolt*, by Doris Reed Stewart. Two very successful performances of the play were given on November 25, with Mr. Eugene J. Ryan in charge of production.



Cast for the production of *THE CHARM SCHOOL* as staged by members of Thespian Troupe No. 147 at Hillsborough High School, Tampa, Florida. Directed by Miss Thelma.

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Liberty, N. Y.

To the Ladies, a three-act comedy by George Kaufman and Marc Connelly, was given by the Seniors of Liberty High School (Thespian Troupe No. 109) as their class play on November 10. The play was directed by Miss Ethel R. Rice, Troupe Sponsor. The production staff included Peter Oliva, manager, Ella Wade, assistant stage manager, and Isidore Gerber, in charge of lights.

San Bernardino, Calif.

Mr. Howard H. Palmer, sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 148 at San Bernardino Senior High School, reports that Bob Brown and Maurice Summers were chosen last year as "the senior actor and the best senior actress for three year's work." Both of these students are leading in their respective colleges. A dramatic event of the fall semester this year was the Thespian-sponsored production of the mystery play, *The Dark House*, on November 10. Mr. Howard reports that over two hundred persons saw the performance which was a huge success.

Custer, S. Dak.

Miss Eva Nelson, sponsor for the newly organized Troupe No. 384 at Custer High School, reports that her production of the Junior Class play, *Growing Pains*, this fall was one of the most successful in recent years. The play was given by the largest crowd ever to be seen in the school building, and the play was well done and enjoyed by the cast.

Monrovia, Calif.

Troupe No. 392 of The National Thespian Society was formally installed at Monrovia-Duarte High School at a special dinner at the Old Orchard Tea Room on Tuesday, December 12. Guests at the dinner included faculty officials and their wives. Mr. K. Wilson, principal of the school, spoke at the dinner. A monologue and a radio skit were presented as part of the program. The first play to be sponsored by the new Troupe No. 392 is the Senior Class play scheduled for production in February. Mrs. Carolyn Dody, drama director, is sponsor for the Troupe.—*Port Lambert, Secretary.*

Idaho

One of the first productions to be sponsored by members of the newly-established Troupe No. 394 at Buhl High School, with Mr. Wilbur Shively as sponsor, was the musical play, *When Foster*, by Earl Hobson Smith. Thirty students form the charter roll of this new troupe. Mr. Shively reports that he considers *When Foster* an outstanding play and recommends it highly for groups with musical ability. Excellent work in his production was done by Miss Ellis, a charter Thespian.

Maryville, Tenn.

Members of Troupe No. 164 at Maryville High School are working on several one-act plays this season, with Miss Alberta Coventry as sponsor. The first long play of this year, *Get O' Nine Tails*, was given by Thespian Troupe No. 164 on December 14. Miss Coventry reports that the production was a success from start to finish. The annual one-act play contest will take place in February or early in March.

Missouri Valley, Iowa

D. A. Liercke, new sponsor for Troupe No. 179 at Missouri Valley High School, reports that this season in dramatics for his school was a success. The play, *Spooks*, was given early in the season to the largest crowd to fill the auditorium in recent years. A special feature of the evening was a talk on the aims of the National Thespian Society given by Mr. Liercke, President of Troupe No. 179. The evening of December 15, the entire troupe attended the performance of *One Mad Night* at the Logan, Iowa, High School. The last play of the season, *The Milky Way*, was given on January 31. The Fourth Annual Harrison County One-Act Play Festival will be sponsored by Troupe No. 179 in Missouri Valley on March 7 and 8. Eleven schools will be represented in two different classes, and a critic judge will choose the outstanding individual performances, with no decisions to be made public on the plays themselves. Mr. Liercke is general chairman.

Way, was given on January 31. The Fourth Annual Harrison County One-Act Play Festival will be sponsored by Troupe No. 179 in Missouri Valley on March 7 and 8. Eleven schools will be represented in two different classes, and a critic judge will choose the outstanding individual performances, with no decisions to be made public on the plays themselves. Mr. Liercke is general chairman.

Memphis, Tenn.

A very successful production of Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize Play of 1938, *Our Town*, was given by the students of Humes High

School (Thespian Troupe No. 249) on December 12. The production was given under the direction of Miss Josephine Allensworth.

Burlington, Wash.

An attractive program in the Thespian colors of blue and gold was used for the play, *Seven Sisters*, given on October 27 by students of Burlington High School (Thespian Troupe No. 333), with Miss Patricia Ryan in charge of the production. The program included some interesting production notes and a list of patrons and patronesses. A large group of students and faculty members were on the production staff.

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What's New Among Books and Plays

EDITED BY H. T. LEEPER

Review Staff: Donald Woods, Carl Cummings, Kari Natalie Reed, Robert W. Masters, Daniel Turner, Mary Ella Bovee.

Reviews appearing in this department aim to help our readers keep up with recent books and plays. The opinions expressed are those of the reviewer, and mention of a book or play in this department does not necessarily mean that such a publication is recommended by THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN.

Longmans, Green and Co., 55 Fifth Ave., New York City.

A Face at the Window, a play for Christmas in one act, by Florence Clay Knox. 2 m., 3 w., fairy queen fairies, and Santa Claus. Fairies may be as many and tiny as you wish. Royalty upon application. Modern setting. Three scenes but all the same room; evening, 5 a. m., morning. Setting offers no difficulties of production. It is even possible to play this on a platform without curtains. This play is imaginative and should produce an effective, emotional mood. It is pleasingly fanciful and will be enjoyed both by children and adults. It centers around the legend that Christ may visit those here on earth in the guise of a little child. This play is much more worth while and interesting to produce than the average run of Christmas plays.—Kari Natalie Reed.

Search Me, a one-act play, by Robert Middlemass. 5 m., 6 w., 2 prop boys. Royalty upon application. This is a very unusual play and will lend itself to many different forms of production. It will be of particular interest to study groups and classes in dramatics and offers a fascinating experimental problem for the stage crew. It has 6 scenes with 4 different sets but all of these are in full view of the audience during the entire play. The plot itself is amusing. It concerns the experience of a man whose drivers license has been suspended temporarily. His attempt to keep this information from his employer and still carry on his regular duties produces humorous situations. A very fine play if you're looking for something unusual.—Kari Natalie Reed.

T. S. Denison & Co., 203 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago.

The Good Bad Boy, comedy-melodrama in 3 acts by Robert St. Clair. 8 m., 9 w. (3 boys and 4 girls have short parts) Royalty, \$10.00. Tommy Smith, a frequent case before the juvenile court, appears this time charged with burglary. Through the testimony of Andy, Tommy's pal, the sympathetic judge, Edythe Lawson, gets at the root of the trouble and finds that Tommy is the unwilling tool of his cruel and unscrupulous foster father in disburbing marihuana. But best of all Edythe learns that Tommy is really her own son who was kidnapped as a baby. First act furnishes comedy in a great variety of youths before the court. Second and third acts are quite highly dramatic and build to a good climax. Several opportunities for good characterization. Comedy and melodrama are quite skillfully blended.

The Campbells Are Coming, farce in 3 acts, by Jay Tobias. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty. Kingston Campbell and his aristocratic mother come to visit Kay Brannigan to whom he has become engaged at college. Kay wants to impress the Campbells favorably, but the other Brannigans conspire and stage an act in which they pretend to be hillbillies so that Kingston will refuse to marry Kay, and she will return to her hometown sweetheart. The plan succeeds and also reveals the true identity of Mrs. Campbell—a real hillbilly. Seven of the roles are very broad farce and all ten offer good opportunities for acting.—Daniel Turner.

Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

David Harum, a comedy in 3 acts, by Edward Noyes Westcott. 11 m., 3 w. Royalty, \$25.00. A dramatization of Westcott's novel, *David Harum*, by R. & M. W. Hitchcock. To Homeville, New York, comes John Lenox to

be employed in the bank of David Harum, the kindly old man who applies his business shrewdness to the horse trading for which he has an unbounded zest. John is joined in Homeville by his sweetheart, Mary Blake, who takes a teaching job there. Gen. Wolsey Mary's guardian, comes to break up her attachment to John and take her home, but he is naively dissuaded by David Harum. Although Mary distrusts Harum for his hard bargain, the old banker is eventually revealed for what he really is—a big-hearted benefactor who disguises the real magnitude of his generous charity. The great charm of the play lies in the wide variety of carefully drawn characters, and especially in the gay non-chalant humor of David Harum himself. A fine play with splendid characterizations of honest, lovable people who are just "plain folks."

Laughing Gas, a melodramatic farce in 3 acts, by Charles D. Whatman. 4 m., 7 w. First performance, non-royalty; repeat performances, \$2.50 each. Aunt Amy Whitman comes to New York with her nieces, Penny and Vivian, where they take an apartment in Green Village so that Vivian may make the necessary contacts to become a radio performer. The entire action takes place in the apartment during the night of their arrival. The "contacts" come sooner and in greater variety than the girls expect. The farce element is supplemented throughout by an air of suspense and mystery.—Daniel Turner.

The Imaginary Invalid, a comedy in three acts, by Moliere. Adapted for production by Merritt Stone. 8 m., 4 w. No royalty. Another adaptation of Moliere's classic. This one has also been especially prepared for school use. Stage directions and instructions for production are plentiful and helpful. The story of the imaginary invalid and how he is cured of his liking for doctors is too well known to need repeating.

Walter H. Baker Company, 178 Tremont St., Boston, Mass.

Raggedy Nan, a comedy in three acts by Jean Provençe. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$10.00. Phineas Scroggs, richest, most powerful, and meanest man in town, upon the death of his father forecloses the mortgage on the farm and sends Nan, now an orphan, to the orphanage. Nan, dirty, ragged, and a runaway from orphanage, comes to Gramp Withers who employs her, dressed as a boy, as the new hired man. Skillfully she outwits Scroggs, and plans of Gramp's daughter-in-law to get rid of Scroggs' son as her daughter's husband, finally marries Tommy, a fine young fellow. This is a charming, lighthearted comedy, presenting no casting or acting difficulties.

China Blue Eyes, a comedy in three acts by Carl Webster Pierce. 8 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$10. The two years of difference in age between the trouble-making chasm between the Haven family, Peter, 17, and Irving, 15. Peter, feeling grown-up, wants, and tries various means of getting, their mutual room to himself for a coming visit of a friend, the son of a family. Irving, determining not to be out-started, starts a practical joke on Peter to get the disaster nearly follows for the family friends, and themselves before each decides to be a man, take his punishment, and be a brother to the other. This is a humanizing story that presents a true, warm hearted picture of life in a family with teenagers. Particularly suited to teen-age people.

Dramatic Publishing Co., 59 East Van Buren Chicago, Ill.

Phinney Girls, a comedy in three acts by Edwin Scribner. No royalty. 12 parts must be purchased. Cast of 12 women. An amusing and entertaining comedy in an all-woman cast. The play has many colorful comic situations, all of which take place in the sitting room of the spinster Phinney home. The characters are especially well drawn and provide excellent material for clever characterizations. Abbie, the 60-year old mother, goes from ski sliding to auto driving. The love thwarted girl, takes up with a spiritualist medium, and Debbie, the mild little deaf sister, sits quietly through the play at a solitaire game, making remarks at the proper time. How the delightful and interesting Phinney girls were saved from the fleecing of Madame Zariba, the spiritualist, is shown in a rollickingly funny scene at a spiritualist seance. The gossip ladies of the neighborhood, the determined housekeeper Lizzie Ann, and the young girl convict add interesting angles to this entertaining story.—*Robert Masters*.

North Star, a drama in one act by Jacob Krohn. 6 m., 5 w., and extras. No royalty until further notice in catalogue. The play opens on a March night in 1834, at Abolition, Illinois. Abe Lincoln comes to New Dr. Allen's cabin and learns that the doctor is a member of the Underground Railroad, and that he has a runaway slave hidden in the cabin. The doctor asks Abe to help him smuggle the slave past the Clary's Grove Boys, who live on the route the Negro must take. Though Abe does not believe in slavery, he does believe in the illegal Underground Railroad. While Abe is pondering what to do, the Clary's Grove Boys swagger into the doctor's cabin, and discover the Negro. The doctor is going to turn him over to the authorities, who, according to law, must return the slave to his master. Abe offers to wrestle with the three of the Clary's Grove Boys for the slave's freedom. After a violent struggle, Abe wins and the slave goes free.

This play will need careful casting. The characters read well and the climaxes are skillfully drawn. It should prove an excellent tournament play.—*Carl Cummings*.

The Northwestern Press, 2200 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn.

Flyin' High, a comedy drama in three acts, by Robert Ray. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$10. This play embodies the spirit of today, through which makes its greatest bid as a worthy newcomer to the field of drama. Inspired, as it were, by the recent event of international acclaim, its author has created, in the role of Tommy Merrill, one of those dreamers for whom our world has so little sympathy. The worthy lesson of tolerance is taught through a series of human incidents. The cast is small, well balanced, each member of which is drawn with vivid, skillful, and realistic strokes by the pen of an intelligent and understanding writer. *Flyin' High* is well above the usual \$10 royalty plays, thus bringing it within the reach of smaller groups, who must consider both expense and profit.—*Mary Ella*.

Contemporary Play Publications, 112 West 42nd St., New York.

Anti-Nazi One Act Plays, edited by Stephen Moore. Royalties quoted on application. Price \$1.00. The book includes *The Inheritance*, *The Pretext*, *Laugh God!*, *The Bishop's Master*, *On the Border*, and *Jacob Comes Home*. As is stated in the introductory note, the play can be appraised as being a calm, dispassionate, yet vital and veracious dramatization of fear, terror and ruthlessness as practiced by the Nazis upon the great mass of "alien" people today. These plays are mature and their high school use will depend upon the maturity of the audience at which they are not beyond high school capability. Of the collection *The Pretext* and *Jacob Comes Home* are perhaps best fitted for high school use.—*H. T. L.*

Dramatists' Play Service, 6 East 39th St., New York City.

Our Girls, a farce comedy in three acts, by Conrad Seiler. Royalty, \$15.00. 6 men, 5 women. *Our Girls* is an entertaining farce which provides the comic situation of three teen-age boys who must don skirts and ribbons to pose as girls in order to collect a legacy. The wealthy aunt arrives from England to visit her supposed "nieces" and is amazed at the extraordinary girls. The trials and the tribulations of the "girls" in their difficulties to manage effectively and convincingly their newly acquired curls, ruffles and laces, their feminine sounding voices, and their over-sized feet provide good comedy. Their strange conduct finally outrages Aunt Jessie who leaves in a huff, vowing to cut them off without a cent. She returns unexpectedly and surprises the "girls" who had thankfully returned to their natural male stage. Aunt Jessie admits, after they recover from their first horror at being found out, that she knew of the trick all the time.—*Robert W. Masters*.

Ivan Bloom Hardin Co., 3806 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines, Iowa.

READINGS:

Rascal Beats Rogue, a humorous reading in which Master Pierre Patelin defends the shepherd in court, and then is outwitted by the shepherd when he attempts to collect his fee. Four men characters. Excellent pantomime. 10 min.

Alice In Wonderland, a humorous reading which went to the finals of the 1939 National Forensic Tournament. Alice meets the March Hare, the Queen of Hearts and other strange characters. 10 min.

Elizabeth the Queen, by Maxwell Anderson. This is the scene in which Essex and Elizabeth meet for the last time. Very dramatic. An excellent choice for a dramatic reading.

A Reprieve from Death, dramatic reading cut from the play, *Last Page*, by Josephine Bacon. Man awaiting execution is visited by the spirit of his wife, who has committed suicide. Characters, one man, one woman. 11 min.

Row, Peterson & Co., Evanston, Ill.

Hasting Pudding, a comedy in three acts, by Robert Malow. 4 m., 4 w. Royalty quoted on application. Snipe and his shrewish wife, keepers of the 18th century Dark Horse Inn, are not above consorting with Kit Morgan, gentleman-highwayman. Kit and Sherry, the innkeeper's witty daughter, have a romantic interest in each other. Two of Kit's victims, Lady Castletower and her foppish son, Geoffrey, arrive at the inn. The latter is betrothed to Lady Jane Humphries, a high-spirited young lady of a nearby estate. Sherry makes a play for Geoffrey, while pretending to be an actress on vacation. Meanwhile, Lady Jane finds a kindred spirit in Kit. Many amusing complications arise before the couples return to their original interests. Eighteenth century costumes and one set are needed. The lines are imitative of the flowery speech of that period, but that does not interfere with the bright and boisterous fun. Excellent for advanced groups, yet not at all too difficult for high school.

Running Wild, a farce in three acts, by Glenn Hughes. 8 m., 6 w. Royalty quoted on application. Several movie-struck people hear that Mr. Goodwin, Hollywood film executive, is coming to the Desert Inn for a quiet week-end. Under the leadership of Don Thomas, a young writer, they plan to demonstrate their abilities to Goodwin by staging one of Don's murder-mystery scenarios as if it were the real thing. Circumstances make the affair appear worse than planned, particularly when the real sheriff appears at the height of the excitement. When things are finally straightened out, the group finds out what the audience knew all the time: that the supposed Goodwin is a half-deaf biology professor, while the real Goodwin has been one of those helping stage the hoax. This is another of Mr. Hughes' first-rate farces.—*H. T. L.*

Good News! Spring Plays!

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BLACK CAT 75c

Mystery thriller by Robert St. Clair, for 5 men, 5 women. 1 int. Royalty, \$25.00. "The play was well received and highly praised."—H. L. P., Timber Lake, So. Dak.

OBSTINATE BRIDE 50c

Comedy for 6 men, 6 women. 1 int. Royalty, \$10.00. "... was a real success, and I was so pleased with it."—M. Henderson, Macedonia, Iowa.

TANGLED YARN 50c

Comedy by Dagmar Vola, for 5 men, 7 women. 1 int. Royalty, \$10.00. "We counted laughs and there were 250! Everyone was so well pleased and the cast never grew tired of it."—L. Bailey, Caribou, Maine.

ROMANTIC BY REQUEST 75c

Comedy by Ahlene Fitch, for 4 men, 5 women. 1 ext. Royalty, \$25.00. "The play was a huge success from all angles."—W. R. Rykken, Dodge Center, Minn.

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Our Periodicals in Review

REVIEWED BY LOTTA JUNE MILLER

Articles reviewed in this department are selected for their practical value to drama teachers and students. These reviews will have achieved their purpose if they instill a desire among our readers to maintain an active acquaintance with the periodicals.

HOW TO RAISE A CHILD. By Alva Johnston and Fred Smith. *Saturday Evening Post* for January 20, 1940. At last the much-talked-of genius, Orson Welles, is placed under the microscope for observation. At the age of two he spoke like a college professor and was a lover of Shakespeare. He ran his own puppet theater, wrote his plays, spoke the lines, and manipulated the strings. On the other hand, at twenty-four he cannot add a column of figures and is often cheated badly in financial transactions. This is the first of a series of articles devoted to the life of Orson Welles. Read and be amazed.

DRAMA RULE-BOOK. By Brooks Atkinson. *New York Times* for January 14, 1940. A good deal has been said in drama writing classes and English literature courses regarding the rules governing good plays. Yet Brooks Atkinson, in answer to many letters regarding his flaying of Aristotle's rules, states that "rules are only a by-product of creation" and that they are dull, engendering a stupor in those who pay attention to them." Shakespeare, on the one hand, was not rule-bound and yet created some of the finest plays of all times. Aristotle's poetry could not touch him with all his rules. Thus, Mr. Atkinson develops his thesis by sighting examples in both modern and classical literature. He says, "The basic thing in art is not a code of good behavior, but an artist with the mind and spirit and direct contact with life. He needs rules less than he needs freedom of expression." This article would be well worth the time of any English or Dramatics teacher. It would also prove of interest to advanced students, especially those attempting playwriting.

THE UNDECLARED WAR AND CHINA'S NEW DRAMA. By Karl Chia Chen. *Theatre Arts Monthly* for December, 1939. About a year ago, I reviewed an article regarding the influence of the war on Chinese drama. Again it is called to our attention in *Theatre Arts*. It wasn't until the Japanese invaded China that this great country actually began to rely on her own resources for play material. Heretofore, many of her scripts were actually plagiarized from other countries. Now she uses the stage for actual propaganda and produces more shows than ever before.

A LABORATORY THEATRE. By Robert B. Burrows. *Players Magazine* for January, 1940. If you are trying to solve the problem of how to serve the largest number of students in acting, you may find an answer in this article. An ordinary classroom has been rebuilt to offer two acting areas: a raised stage at one end and an acting area in the center. In this central space, however, no scenery is used, thus keeping the cost of production down to a minimum. In this way many students may be in plays who would not otherwise have a chance in a large production.

THE THEATRE. By Leta Clews Cromwell. *Forum* for January, 1940. Just as your history teacher has told you many times, don't read just one writer's account of a battle; read several. For the same reason, don't be content with one critic's opinion of the current plays. Miss Cromwell is apparently not well pleased with Maxwell Anderson's *Key Largo* nor does she think that Sidney Kingsley's play, *The World We Make*, has a thesis appropriate to the dramatic arts. "Problems of mental distress

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are better discussed in books," she says. *Margaret for Error*, contrary to the majority of critics, is definitely a credit to Clare Boothe. She also likes *Life With Father*.

NATIONAL THEATRE, 1940. By Edith J. R. Isaacs. *Theatre Arts Monthly* for January, 1940. All Thespians should give three rousing cheers for the ground work laid by Mrs. Hallie Flanagan in promoting a National Theatre in America. The organization, now being promoted under the excellent guidance of Robert E. Sherwood, will present definite plans to Congress this session. Every Thespian should read this article and make his opinion felt in his district.

FAREWELL TO SCENE ARCHITECTURE. By George R. Kernodle. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* for December, 1939. Directors and advanced students of scenic design will find an interesting history of the fall and now the rise of painted scenery. Plastic sets have had their day, and once more the painted drop has come into its own. It is lighter and easier to manage. Furthermore, the magic of modern lighting can create almost any effect desired.

PORTRAIT OF A PRESS AGENT. *Time* for January, 8, 1940. "A show without a press agent would be like a store without a show window. This is a good article for students and instructors interested in publicity of school shows. Among the most successful is Press Agent Richard Maney who can change a "flop" into a "hit." With luck he can make ten articles simply out of announcing the production, the cast, the director, what the play is about, where it will tryout, and when it will open. You should read for yourself his stunts for bringing publicity to a show.

THE CHRISTMAS PLAY AS A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE. By Gunnar Horn. *School Activities* for December, 1939. Perhaps your faculty or P.T.A. has long been pondering the question of how to introduce religious education into your school. The Benson High School in Omaha, Nebraska, has in part solved the problem by producing a Christmas play of a religious nature. Among those produced were: *The Chimes Rang*, *Mr. Scrooge*, *Come Let Adore Him*, *In the Light of the Star*, and *There Were Shepherds*.

CULTURE BY FORCE. By Brooks Atkinson. *New York Times* for October 15, 1939. This article is especially pertinent for English drama teachers who persist in cramming Shakespeare down the mental throats of students. Taken from the academic standpoint, it is no wonder that children as adults abhor the very name of the Bard. Mr. Atkinson recommends that the logical approach is through the study of man, himself. "As a study," he says, "Shakespeare is a bore; some of his work is just tripe. But as a man of mind and spirit, all radiance. The proper study of Shakespeare is that man."

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